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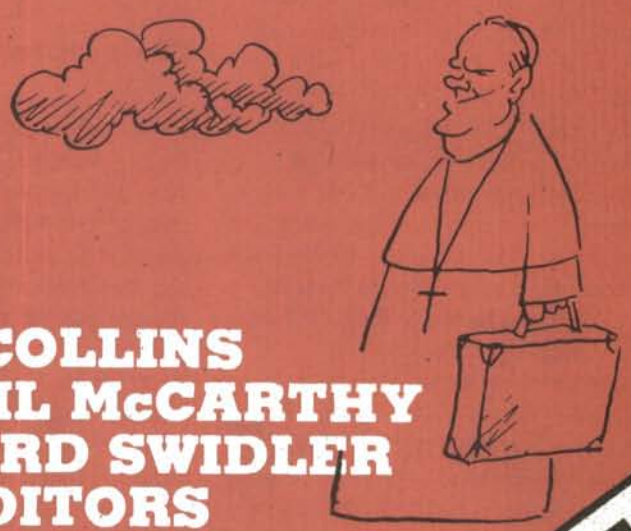
THE PERIPATETIC POPE



PAUL COLLINS
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THE EDITORS

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JAN ROSENBERG

George Weigel explains it
PETER STEINFELS

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CORRESPONDENCE

Language in church

Heidelberg, W. Germany

To the Editors: As to the language in the church [editorial "The Good News on Man," April 24] there are, it seems to me, two important needs of the present: to avoid the designation of God one-sidedly as man and father; and to avoid the discrimination against women.

Concerning discrimination against women, in our parish we have this regulation: when a man is lecturer, he says: "*Schwestern und Brüder*" (Sisters and Brothers), when a woman, she says: "*Brüder und Schwestern*" (Brothers and Sisters).

ALFONS BEIL

Executive scofflaw

Winston-Salem, N.C.

To the Editors: Commonweal, I am still bowing! At last a periodical of stature and probity tells us ["Im_ _ _ ch Reagan?" June 5], with unmistakable clarity, what kind of a president we have: a liar, a cheat, a scofflaw. It's not that we didn't know this or know that averting our eyes would not change his sorry course in bringing this country to its knees, destroying its reputation and credibility. Bad enough to saddle future generations with a deficit in the trillions, but the example of the moral deficit is even more horrendous.

The emperor has no clothes. I am reminded of the last lines of G.K. Chesterton's poem, "The Wife of Flanders": "You have no word to break; no heart to harden./Ride on and prosper. You have lost your spurs."

CARROLL ESTES

Requiem politics

Calabash, N.C.

To the Editors: I am astounded you regard Bishop McGann's outrageous remarks at William J. Casey's funeral Mass as a "brave gesture" ["Et Cetera," June 5].

The bishop was in the church in his capacity as clergyman to deliver the requiem homily, and not to use the occasion to air his political opinions which are diametrically opposed to those held by the deceased. Bishop McGann used a most solemn religious service to deliver his views to a captive audience which included the president of the United States. It was a cheap shot.

I hold no brief for the *contras,* but the bishop did a vast disservice to the Catholic church as witnessed by the flood of criticism and negative mail addressed to him because of his remarks.

I recommend that, instead of suggesting your readers write letters of support to Bishop McGann for his unchristian behavior, you publicly urge the bishops to use your pages to issue an apology.

Another stand like this on your part and you may cancel my subscription.

KENNETH MANNING

Chilean forecast

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Virginia Bouvier's report from Santiago ["Business As Usual," June 19] is carefully written, informative, and disturbing. The continuing repression in military-ruled Chile which she describes — the intimidation of foreign journalists, the persecution of Catholic church critics, the harassment of civilians who publicly complained about conditions in Chile during the pope's April visit — are especially significant in light of the regime's plans for a change of government in early 1989.

Although the vast majority of Chileans have made it clear they wish directly to elect their next leaders, President Augusto Pinochet apparently intends to engineer the election process and possibly succeed himself. If the tempo of persecution described by Bouvier persists, and the authorities fail to bend to the popular demand for democratic freedoms and open elections — as their counterparts in authoritarian South Korea have recently done — Chile faces a bleak future of increased political tensions and violence.

ARTURO VALENZUELA
PAMELA CONSTABLE

What are you implying?

Lansing, Ill.

To the Editors: Are you implying in your editorial, "Selective Conservatism" [June 19], that American voters are too ignorant to select a CEO and that liberal policies should be imposed regardless? My! My!

The Catholic church should be dispensing living water, effecting healings, casting out demons, nurturing souls, and fully separate from political utterings and political activity; and stop reducing Our Lord to some kind of social reformer.

EVERETT KING

Eloquent narrative

Alexandria, Va.

To the Editors: For all the RENEW programs, liturgical renewals, theological updates, and curial insistence on orthodoxy, the way of God remains a continually surprising mystery. Thanks for

(Continued on page 511)

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COMMONWEAL

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Engulfed

Over twenty-five thousand U.S. military personnel and thirty U.S. ships are scheduled to be in or near the Persian Gulf this week. Yet, during one of the largest U.S. military buildups in any region since the Vietnam war, Congress still has not been "officially notified," and most Americans are hard pressed to say exactly why we are courting disaster, and very possibly war, in a region where, for the greater part of seven years, U.S. policy has been focused on isolating both feuding parties, Iran and Iraq. Neutrality was at least our stated policy and the policy of our European allies. Today, the policy of our European allies remains intact, but our own has vastly changed. Why? It is difficult to say, though the reason for our collective ignorance is clear: Mr. Reagan's administration has failed to tell us what his purposes and policy are. And most of the rhetoric that has accompanied our ships to the gulf cannot stand the test either of history or common sense.

Take, for example, the "reason" stated last March when the U.S. agreed to reflag Kuwaiti tankers: that the United States is ready to help protect "neutral" Kuwait, portrayed as a hapless victim of the supertanker war. In actuality, Kuwait is an ally of Iraq and has been so throughout the 1980s, hardly qualifying it as a neutral state. Most of the attacks in the Iran-Iraq tanker war have actually been made by Iraq against Iranian ships and oil installations. Kuwait had suffered not one attack in the tanker war for eight months when the Reagan administration rushed to its "defense." In what Theodore Draper calls "one of the most extraordinary feats of modern diplomacy," (*New York Review of Books*, July 16) tiny Kuwait orchestrated the intervention of both superpowers in the Iran-Iraq war, playing one off against the other. The results were anything but even. The deal Kuwait made with the Soviets resulted in the sending of three Soviet ships, with the promise of chartering more if necessary. The U.S. could have sent four ships, maintaining its one-upmanship, but without direct involvement. Instead, we agreed to reflag eleven ships, which escalated immediately into the silly escorting service that backfired with the first mine blast; the tankers turned out to be less vulnerable than the ships accompanying them.

Ostensibly, what made the Kuwaiti appeal compelling to the U.S., and this is Draper's main point, was their decision to ask the Soviets for assistance first. American intervention then became "necessary" to counteract Soviet influence in the gulf. Of course, the Soviets have been the primary arms supplier of both Iraq and Kuwait for several years, and the Soviets have not been on good terms with Iran since the Iranian Communists were suppressed, two Soviet ships were attacked in the region, and one impounded. Not only have the Soviets not displayed any signs of threatening the U.S. or U.S. interests per se in the gulf, their recent agreement to charter Kuwaiti ships came in response to the same kind of invitation extended to the U.S., and by the same host country: Kuwait. Is their claim to a legitimate role in the

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region less defensible than our own?

Is it wrong to assume that the U.S. and Soviet Union have no mutual interests in the Persian Gulf (see J. Bryan Hehir, *Commonweal*, August 14)? Furthermore, Soviet support was crucial to the UN Security Council resolution for a cease-fire. It will be just as crucial if the U.S. tries to rally stronger UN action, as the Reagan administration has announced.

What about U.S. oil interests? While it is common knowledge that 57 percent of the world's oil reserves are controlled by the gulf nations (nearly half that amount by Saudi Arabia alone), only 4 percent of U.S. oil imports travel through the Strait of Hormuz. Much more heavily dependent upon Iranian oil are our allies in Europe and Japan, but Kuwait did not invite their presence, and when the U.S. asked for minesweepers and additional escorts, they declined, except for Britain and France who, it turns out, will send minesweepers to accompany their own ships in the region. The long-range oil supply problems that face the West are real, but neither this reflagging nor any face-off in the Persian Gulf will address that long-term situation.

Perhaps the flimsiest excuse offered for our involvement has been that the U.S. presence is a means of protecting freedom of navigation through world sea lanes. If that is so, why did the U.S. decide to protect this freedom now rather than during the height of the tanker war? And has the U.S. presence endangered navigation more than it has helped, at least as far as mine damage to Kuwaiti vessels is concerned?

The question Draper chooses not to address, but which the U.S. must consider if it is to construct any credible policy in the gulf, is the threat of the Iranian revolution itself. Despite the favors we have been doing for Iran lately — selling it arms in exchange for undelivered hostages, and now, a reflagging operation that has paradoxically protected Iran's soft spot, allowing it to step-up its oil exports through the strait — there are genuine reasons to fear the spread of Islamic fundamentalism.

But just as our reflagging operation cannot settle the problems of long-range oil reserves, so it cannot begin to address the Islamic revolution. Containing that revolution will necessitate some degree of unity among the other Arab nations to hold it off, in addition to anything the U.S. or even the Soviets might do. Staring Khomeini down is not an effective policy.

Even the *Economist*, while cheering on the current American operation, acknowledges that we are in effect daring Khomeini to attack us. The editors of the *Economist* are sober about the revolution: "Unless it [the U.S.] is prepared to join the war on the ground...there is not much that even a superpower can do about it [the Iranian revolution]" (August 8). What do they recommend? Policing the boundaries; reducing the carnage; backing Saudi Arabia.

Are we in fact ready to "join the war on the ground" not just patrol the strait or attack from the air? Les Aspin (D-Wis.) has suggested mining Iran's harbors as one part of a more encompassing policy (which includes the smart suggestion that we aid the building of pipelines to take away Iran's advantage of controlling the strait). But before we fight mines with mines, or capitulate to Aspin's neat version of the alternatives facing us— "clear out," "retaliate," or "stand there" — we need to consider carefully what our purposes are, what we are actually willing to risk, and for how long.

A fourth alternative deserves to be tried. The War Powers Act —now being litigated in the federal courts by 114 Democrats in Congress— should be invoked, especially now that Iraq has resumed the tanker war in the face of Iranian stalling on the UN cease-fire. The Act would give Congress sixty days to press the administration to make a plausible case for our involvement, after which Congress could declare war, or find itself unconvinced of the prudence of the administration's activities, and pull our troops out. Since none of the current arguments for our involvement seem to be sound, the sixty days would allow new and substantial arguments to be made. If none were convincing, the sixty-day period could allow the administration to make a graceful exit from the region, declaring its "mission accomplished." The popularity of Mr. Reagan eased the withdrawal of our troops from Lebanon in 1984; the War Powers Act could accomplish the same thing, only with the entire Congress to back it up.

Mr. Aspin's proposal to mine Iran's waters seems to be predicated upon the assumption that because Iran was thwarted in 1984 when "just one" of its fighters was shot down by the Saudis, one mine blast or so would surely call their bluff today. No use calling their bluff until we have sorted out just what there is to be gained by it, what our second step will be in the event that there is more to their bluff than we can predict. This is not 1984, and currently the Iranians are fired up in a war of words with the Saudis over the 400 killed during the Mecca riots. Saudi Arabia is so cautious today that it would not even offer temporary landing rights which the U.S. needed in the Kuwait operation; nor would Kuwait itself. Khomeini's Day of Hatred for the United States may tempt us to retaliate militarily, but are we ready for war? And, if we are, why? These are not cowardly questions. They are merely the precise questions that need intelligent, well-thought- out answers before the U.S. is dragged down unwittingly by the strong and ancient undercurrents of the Persian Gulf.

THE PAPAL VISIT

No one should belittle the heartfelt enthusiasm of the millions of American Catholics who will line the roads and pack the stadiums during the Holy Father's visit to the United States. It is not, however, an enthusiasm we can, without serious qualifications, share. John Paul II is an extraordinary man possessed of a powerful vision of the church and of the papacy. It is the messianic and heroic elements of the faith on which this pope, deeply rooted in his homeland's tragic experience, insists: suf-

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fering, struggle, and persecution as the trying fires of Christian life; sacrifice and discipline; non-conformity to the spirit of the age. Unfortunately the same vision lacks room for genuine dialogue, mistrusts pluralism, cannot account for past or future change, refuses to share power. Appointment by appointment, the pope is reforming the hierarchy in his own image. The leadership he is shaping will safely skirt all dangers of a diluted Catholic identity at the cost of missing enormous opportunities to challenge our world with the Gospel. Oddly enough, the heroic pope will foster a low-risk church.

The pope will encounter not only enthusiastic crowds but angry demonstrators. We cannot very well identify with them either. In some cases, their anger is understandable (in others, it reflects plain old-fashioned anti-Catholicism); but seldom do we sense a self-preserving awareness of how corrosive even justifiable anger can be. There is too frequently a kind of counter-triumphalism behind this anti-papal fervor, a certitude about Right Answers as closed to questioning as the Vatican, a certitude that arms itself not with immutable categories of neo-Scholasticism but with pieties of modern right-thinking.

The Holy Father's visit is only a few moments—one hopes joyful ones—in a long process. His words in New Orleans or Los Angeles will find their meaning in his deeds back in Rome—in his attitude toward the canon law strictures that would narrow academic freedom for Catholic higher education, in his next major appointments, in his interventions with religious orders, in his reform of Vatican finances, in his stance toward the synod on the laity. Frankly, we do not think that the "chilling" of Vatican II is about to end. Lay people who wish to live a renewed Catholicism will have to find and nurture their own resources—intellectual, institutional, and spiritual. If they find Rome's positions unsatisfactory, they will have to develop their own—on the purposes and limits of sexual behavior, on the protection of new human life, on the essential conditions and practical maintenance of Catholic identity, on the relationship between prophetic departures and accountability to the whole church and its tradition. This work cannot be done on a simple diet of opposition to Rome.

Can John Paul II break through the reduction of his message to one more clash over sex? Can he transcend the media's fascination with the hardly fresh revelation that American Catholics honor the pope but disagree (think of it!) with many of his pronouncements? We hope so. We will not be cheering—or jeering—but, from a distance, watching and praying.

A LEAN CHAIN OF HOPE

Pablo Neruda once described Central America as "a rosary of misery that shapes the waste of the Americas," a "gathering place for the tears of two oceans." After the last sorrowful decades, those two oceans are at flood tide.

According to recent UN figures, 65 percent of Central Americans are impoverished, and 52 percent of their children are malnourished. The chain of misery will extend far into the future. Central America is polarized by armed conflict and paralyzed by economic depression. Abraham Lowenthal has pointed out in these pages [May 8] that as a result of regional political unrest and a faltering world economy, Central America's exports have fallen 20 percent since 1980. Per capita income in the region has shrunk precipitously at the same time: Costa Rica and Guatemala are now at their own 1972 levels; Honduras—the poorest country in the region—has sunk to its 1970 position; and the civil-war-torn countries of Nicaragua and El Salvador have reverted to development levels they had surpassed in the early 1960s.

The Central American peace proposal signed in Guatemala City on August 7 may not be a full-scale peace accord, nor even a fully detailed plan for regional recovery. But it is the most significant effort by Central Americans in recent history to direct their own destiny. The credit goes primarily to Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez. Even before his election in 1986, Arias was formulating the outline of the present plan.

A variety of points is addressed by the Arias accord, and at least one substantial obstacle has already been surmounted. The plan is not imposed; it is indigenous. That is both its strongest appeal and its greatest incentive. It may signal, at long last, the coming of age of Central America itself in mediating its own complex difficulties.

The terms of the Arias agreement are not ironclad. But their substance is promising, both for the agreement's signatories and their neighbors, south and north. Two weeks after the agreement, thirteen countries, including the five signers, met in Caracas. They created a commission to verify compliance with the accord. An economic emergency fund was set up to assist the five signatory nations, a realization that there must be *plata* as well as platitudes. Pressure for compliance with this first-of-its-kind agreement comes from those who speak the treaty's language. But its ultimate strength rests on the self-interest of the signatories themselves.

Does the accord recognize the interests of the United States? Those interests—of security and stability—are best advanced in the long run by Central Americans taking responsibility for their own destiny. House Speaker Jim Wright struck the right chord by inviting President Arias to address the full Congress later this month. Wright is correct in saying that any discussion of U.S. military aid to insurgents in Central America should be put on the back burner while the Arias accord is being tested. While monitoring developments, Congress should devote increased attention to an even more perilous situation: the political and economic future of Mexico.

The risks of the Arias accord are understood no more keenly than by Central Americans. That is why Cardinal Obando y Bravo's prayer at the first meeting of Nicaragua's National Reconcilation Committee, to build "peace based on truth, love, justice, and freedom," should underlie the efforts of all those involved in the Arias experiment. Then perhaps the "lean chain of sorrows" Neruda wrote of in Central America may finally if gradually be transformed into something more glorious and joyful.

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ARCHIE BUNKER, ROLL OVER
WHEN TWO BRING HOME THE BACON

The Teamsters' Union, that bastion of male supremacy, recently held a national conference on problems of family and family policy. If the spirit of Archie Bunker were alive anywhere, you would think it would be safe among our "cowboys of the highway." Archie defined himself as the "king of the roost," the sole breadwinner whose wife "didn't have to work." And we can hear Edith, sincerely if submissively, echoing Archie's views. These were men and women who firmly agreed that it was his job to support the family, hers to stay home and take care of it. Today's men, up and down the income ladder, may still want to be "king of the roost," but they are no longer the sole breadwinner.

A man's struggle to provide a "family wage" became more and more difficult through the inflationary, deindustrializing 1960s and 1970s. Cutbacks and plant closings as a result of foreign competition meant the loss of decent wages and jobs once thought to be secure. What was passing was the traditional American promise that someone whose only credential was a willingness to work long and hard with his hands could earn a good wage for his family. Median family income peaked in 1973 at $29,172 and has declined ever since, sinking to $27,757 in 1985. Men's incomes fared even worse as the number of high-paying, semi-skilled jobs dropped sharply after 1970 while the economy was generating a staggering number of low-paying positions. Alarming numbers of young black men were failing to grasp even the bottom rung of the job market ladder — a prerequisite to their ability to form stable families.

For many it was the family that provided the social safety net. Taking up the slack, women moved into the labor force in unprecedented numbers. But, short of polygamy or child labor, the limits of that safety net have already been reached by the majority of families.

Though women's outside work may have eased life materially, households of two parents with full-time jobs have been a mixed blessing socially and psychologically. Caring for young children, in particular, is an ongoing struggle for most parents. Work and family vie for what often feels like a shrinking amount of time. As things now stand, working parents are left on their own to construct and mend the patchwork arrangements that meet their, and their children's, needs. A surprisingly large number of parents work different shifts from each other in order to be at home for their children. Some have government- or employer-supported child care. And an affluent few hire full-time nannies and housekeepers, most commonly before their children are ready to enter "full day" schooling.

Fast-track women with annual salaries of $80,000 or more still find themselves having to juggle skillfully the competing demands of work and family. As one woman writer — an affluent, recently remarried mother of two — puts it: "You can hire a wife to do the housework and cooking and shopping, but you can't hire a mother for your children."

Proliferating advice literature and workshops on "stress" and "stress management" are after-the-fact responses to the pervasive speed-up. But beyond "stress," or maybe because of it, there are important signs of new insights and new accommodations between husbands and wives. There are even signs of movement toward some genuinely pro-family policies.

The Archie and Edith Bunkers — and many others like them and their children — are making lives for themselves and defining their family relationships in ways that didn't seem possible a decade or two ago. Their new accommodations are

A rose by any other name

For weeks, Dan Rather and the *New York Times* had been mentioning Sri Lanka as a "trouble spot." Maintaining that one shouldn't go looking for trouble, I remained blissfully ignorant of its whereabouts. Then teaching my daughter the countries of the world, I accidentally put my finger on the country called "Sri Lanka."

Both my three-year-old and I had trouble pronouncing "Sri Lanka," so we were about to move to more sensible places like Iceland and Greenland — when I noticed the small print under the name of Sri Lanka: "formerly Ceylon."

So that's where Ceylon went! When I was growing up and learning things, people didn't get up and name themselves. All of a sudden we're faced with Malcolm X and Tania (aka Patty Hearst) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Ms. Geraldine Ferraro and Sri Lanka. No wonder I feel disoriented, drifting, confused, in a world I never named.

Generally speaking, if I don't already know the name of something, it isn't necessary. On the army intelligence test, I first became aware of things I couldn't designate. I did very well on the verbal aptitude section. I knew synonyms like "designate" and "name," and antonyms like "hero" and "draft dodger." But there was a mechanical aptitude test.

Mechanical aptitude! They wanted me to match up pictures of tools, gadgets, mechanical parts that somehow went together. I got the hammer and nail.

It turns out that you don't really need most of those things I couldn't designate. In my experience tools cause more trouble than they fix. The same holds true of people

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reflected in recent national attitude surveys. A *Wall Street Journal* poll found family life to be far more important to the survey respondents than "making a lot of money." (More than 90 percent of the people said they want to be a good parent and to have a happy marriage, while only 12 percent said they consider "being wealthy" to be very important.) And according to *Fortune*, the "balance of worry" is shifting in dual career families. *Fortune's* research suggests that young male executives are at least as likely as their wives to worry during work about their children and to turn down tempting new job offers that infringe on their family time. Slightly more men (30 percent) than women (26 percent) said they had already refused a new job, promotion, or transfer because it would have diminished the time they had to spend with their families.

The survey respondents were also asked to evaluate the job benefits they currently have and to list those they would like to have. They justified their choices, not obvious outgrowths of family-centered values, in ways that complement the pro-family tilt I've been describing. They placed merit raises and management training at the top of their "wish lists" and tied both to their child care concerns. Merit raises would afford them more money to spend on child care, they said, and management training would sensitize their supervisors to the child care needs of the employee.

The increasing involvement of men in women's and family issues is not limited to readers of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Fortune*. A recent study of the values and attitudes of "Democratic defectors" (those traditional Democrats who voted for Reagan in 1984), provides evidence that even in this group there is a growing sensitivity to women's issues, particularly those concerning the workplace and working women. According to analyst Stanley Greenberg, the men, like typical working women, define women's work in terms of its contribution to the family. From this perspective, the advancement of women at work is considered an economic necessity. "The men view women not as a competitor, but as a member of the

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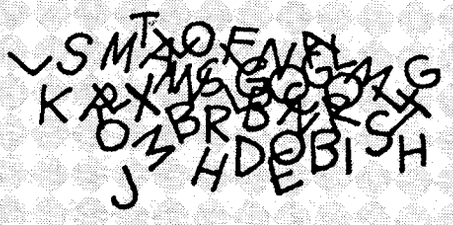
whose names I can't recollect. Unless I have a reason to remember the name — say it's my IRS auditor or car mechanic — I can't be bothered. I'll usually make up for forgetting your name by striking up an interesting, spirited conversation about Sri Lanka.

One thing I like about getting older is that people don't jump up and ask you the names of things, the way they did when I was a kid. "Do you remember me?" some inebriated relative inquires at a wedding. "Yes," the poor child responds vaguely. "Who am I?" the moron asks. Or there you are, minding your own business in geography, when the teacher asks you to locate Ceylon (eventually Sri Lanka).

Other than when playing nostalgic games with my peers — name the two groups that recorded "Those Oldies but Goodies," or set the starting lineup of the 1955 Dodgers — I rarely have to come up with the names of things. So it was disconcerting to discover that our daughter knows the names of things I don't know. Like different kinds of dinosaurs. I don't mean your garden variety dinosaur, like brontosaurus or tyrannosaurus rex. We're talking about pterodactyls, monoclonious, and scolosaurus.

Speaking of dinosaurs reminds me that people address me differently now. At a certain point in life's odyssey — around the time you start using phrases like "at a certain point in life's odyssey" — clerks begin to call you "sir." When I started teaching in 1972, students naturally called



me by my first name. Now I can't get them to do so even when I wear my love beads, Nehru jacket, and Mao cap.

When I told my thesis student last year to call me Bob, she seemed pleased. But she continued to address me as Professor Bell. I reiterated my invitation: "It would be really groovy if we could rap on a first-name basis." The next week she wrote me a note: "Dear Professor Bell — I'm sorry, I can't call you by your first name. You just don't seem like a 'Bob' to me." I guess it's like Ceylon and me; I just can't think of it as "Sri Lanka."

Fortunately, my brother is almost my age and sympathetic to complaints about becoming extinct. He was a terrific athlete and somewhere on the playing field he picked up the nickname, "The Ace."

Every Thanksgiving he organizes the family game of touch football. Last year it was at the time my student was telling me she didn't think of me as "a Bob."

"I don't know if I can play, Ace," I said. "My Achilles' tendon is a mess."

"You gotta play," I heard him say. "You're the ace."

"No, brother. Football was never my best sport. Now basketball and baseball I was pretty good at. But football was never my thing the way it was yours. You could really move the ball down the field. You've slowed down a couple of steps, sure, but that's bound to happen. Even I've slowed down. That's life. But you're still The Ace. To me, you'll *always* be The Ace."

Pause.

"What the hell are you talking about?" he asked. "We've got seven players. You've got to play because you're *the eighth*. I know you've slowed down a lot — have you also gone deaf?"

ROBERT H. BELL

Robert H. Bell teaches English at Williams College and airs his humor on National Public Radio.

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household. Women in the work force represent an opportunity for the family to get ahead . . . to offset their vulnerability."

When the questioner in the study, trying to surface resentment against working wives, asked, "Is too much time spent thinking about working women and not enough time spent on housewives?" the defectors didn't take the bait. One man summed up the views of the majority: "Right now I would say that you almost have to have the wife working." And another: "Wives have to work, the cost of living is ridiculous." Overall, the men's responses indicated not only a surprising absence of hostility, but a wellspring of sympathy.

A Daniel Yankelovich survey finds, similarly, that even among the pro-Reagan, anti-ERA, anti-abortion people, pro-family policies and job benefits generally identified with liberal politicians have considerable support. Nearly three-quarters of these respondents support employee benefits such as parental leave, flexible working hours, and child care. And about 80 percent answered "yes" when asked, "Do you think that there should be a law that guarantees mothers sixteen weeks of unpaid leave when they have a baby?" (Only 20 percent said "yes" when asked about leave for working fathers.)

Dana Friedman of the Conference Board, a business organization, emphasizes the positive effects that competent, stable child care has on parents' productivity at work. "Child care is likely to be *the* fringe benefit of the 1990s, because being sound for employees, it becomes good for business."

Trade unions are taking the lead in translating family/work problems into programmatic demands. Not surprisingly, the predominantly female unions emphasize women's and family issues. The Communication Workers of America, for example, now provides child care at its annual meetings, as do many of its locals around the country. In addition, the union is strongly supporting the Congressional Parental and Medical Leave bill now before Congress. Far more surprising, however, is the substantial involvement of mostly male unions. The United Mine Workers (U.M.W.) is throwing its full support behind the parental leave bill. Asked why the heavily male U.M.W. is pushing "women's issues," Clement Allen, a union spokesman, responded, "I'm a fourth generation coal miner and obviously a male and I don't see the question of parental leave as a woman's issue, and neither does this union. It's a family issue."

The U.M.W.'s rationale goes like this: union miners are stretched and stressed, like other working parents. Parental leave (unpaid, but with your job guaranteed when you return, and your health insurance covered while you're gone) would ease the strain where it really hurts. The United Auto Workers (U.A.W.) have also lined up behind the parental leave initiative before Congress. In addition they have negotiated pilot day care projects in their "Big Three" contract. Mark Levinson of the U.A.W. remarked earlier this year that "the union will definitely be trying to expand what we now have on child care when new contract negotiations begin this summer." And even the nearly all-male Steelworkers, in their most recent contract negotiations, supported family-oriented (or what might previously have been called "women's") benefits and policies.

Trade unions — male as well as female — are translating work/family tensions into sound policies on all levels: at the workplace through contract gains, and at the state and national levels through legislation.

Even the disgruntled "Democratic defectors" and the "new-collar" workers, while suspicious of big institutions, feel that employers and government need to ease their, and their families' lives. The Democratic party, urges David Blankenhorn of the Institute for American Values, needs to seize this issue to rebuild itself into a majority party. This is the "bridge issue" of our time, the issue around which men and women, blacks and whites, and blue-, new-, and white-collar workers can come together.

JAN ROSENBERG

Jan Rosenberg teaches sociology at Long Island University and has written on issues concerning women, work, and family structures.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

THE USES OF SPECTACLE

THE POPE MEETS CATHOLIC EDUCATORS

The visit of Pope John Paul II to the United States this month, as we all know, has been planned as a journey during which the pontiff is to listen and to learn as well as to teach. It is interesting to speculate as to how much this experience will alter his less than approving perception of Catholicism in America, but the very possibility has been a source of hope and inspiration to the planning committees. No one of them has used the opportunity more astutely than planners for the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. At their meeting with the pope in New Orleans on September 12 they will share — with the rest of the National Catholic Education Association — the responsibility for illuminating Catholic education in all its facets and history.

To do this the ACCU planners have taken, as the saying goes, leaves from the pope's own book. John Paul II's sense of theater is well known; it stems, no doubt, from his brief acting career. In addition, under the strictures of a Communist government he learned the uses of spectacle — no world leader has drawn bigger crowds — and the way in which the visual sends the messages it is best not to commit to words. He understands the impact of the modern media — no world

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leader has dominated newscasts more often than he. He is a master in the use of the symbolic. All this the ACCU planners have apparently borne in mind.

Their very place of meeting is symbolic and carries a message. Xavier University of Louisiana, the one Catholic university founded for blacks in an intolerant time, bears testimony to a system which, unlike the European, was meant not for the elite but for all. "There are more Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States than in the rest of the world put together," notes Sister Alice Gallin, O.S.U., director of the ACCU and mistress of ceremonies for the occasion.

The pope will have visual and aural confirmation of this startling fact — first, in the long, impressive procession of the presidents of the colleges and universities wearing their academic gowns and colorful hoods, and in the massing of over 3500 leaders of higher education before him. And second, he is to see and hear in video a dramatic presentation of the institutions themselves professionally prepared by Golden Dome Productions of Notre Dame and narrated by NBC's Bryant Gumbel, a Xavier trustee.

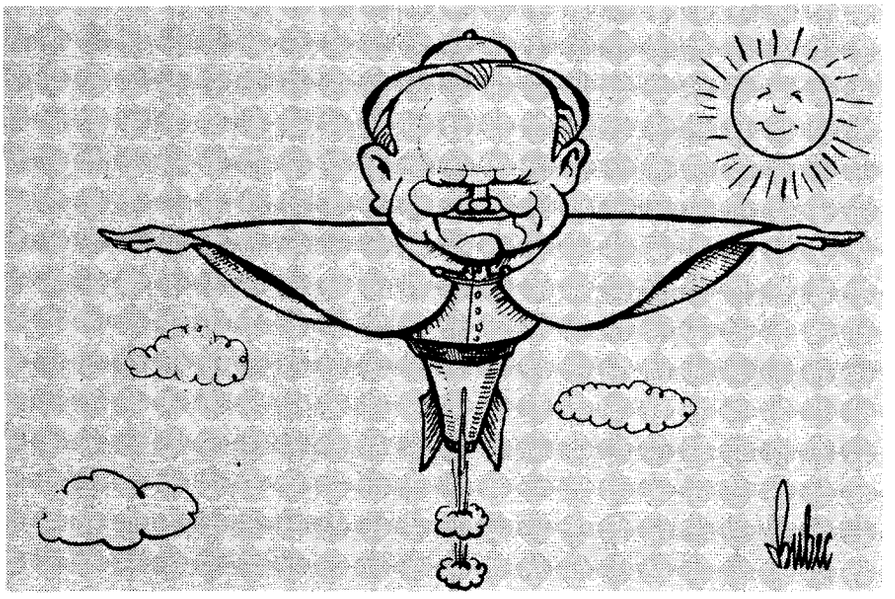
After a kaleidoscopic overview, the video highlights ten institutions, each for a purpose. For example, Georgetown University, now in its two-hundredth year, represents the beginnings and continuity of Catholic liberal arts education in the U.S. The medical school of Loyola in Chicago is representative of the many professional schools. The citation of Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles has a double thrust. On its main campus, high above the Pacific, it has long been part of the significant contribution of religious women to the widespread education of American women; now on its downtown campus it responds to the educational needs of a new community of women — inner-city whites, Asians, Hispanics, and blacks — by offering the Associate in Arts degrees and the specialized Masters degrees they need. Altogether the representative institutions tell the story of a system designed to serve the people — of a system which sociologists say has done more than any other to lift immigrant-descended students into the mainstream of business, government, science, the arts, and the professions.

The entire evening is thought of as a double celebration — of the bicentennial of Catholic higher education in this country and the bicentennial of the Constitution which guaranteed the religious liberty which made that education possible. It is hoped that the pope will draw the inference but, if he does not, the parallel will surely be made in the welcoming speeches which precede the video: freedom and the health of education go hand in hand. In addition to Sister Alice Gallin the speakers will include: Dr. Norman Francis, chairman of the board of Xavier; Archbishop Roach of St. Paul, chairman of the board of the NCEA; Sister Catherine McNamee, C.S.J., president of the NCEA; and Dr. Frank Carins, chairman of the board of the ACCU.

In this mixture of speakers and in the array of leaders before him there are unspoken messages about what the American experience offers to the universal church. Women obviously occupy positions of high authority in this sector of church life and work easily and effectively with bishops and laymen. If in this sector, why not in others? The large numbers of laity among the presidents, executives of associations, and trustees, bespeak the fact that in American Catholic higher education there is a pattern for the partnership of clergy and laity which could well be followed everywhere. "From the very beginning," says Sister Alice Gallin, "members of the laity have played a large part in Catholic higher education in the United States — as cofounders, as donors and trustees, as members of the faculty and administration. Other levels of education now moving in this direction can look to higher education for a model."

No matter how strong the goodwill, a few days can hardly undo the attitudes of a lifetime. John Paul II, wearied by travel and at the end of a long day in an unforgiving climate, will have seen and heard in New Orleans what he chooses to see and hear. Although he may know it intellectually, and although the evidence is before him, it may be hard for him to envision a Catholic people who, because of education, have no large number of "simple faithful" to be shielded and protected from a sudden shift on the part of an educated few.

The concept of a simple Catholic people easily confused and scandalized is strong in this pope's mind. Still, we can hope that he is not totally unmoved and unconvinced by the presentations in New Orleans. But whether he accepts and understands or not, those responsible for Catholic higher education in America have rediscovered its strengths and rejoiced in them. And American Catholics will know, perhaps for the first time, how valuable the American Catholic experience in education has been for us, for our nation, for our church.



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CONTEMPLATION EXPLODED IN MY HEART

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TO THE PLAIN

MARYLEE MITCHAM

THE LAITY & THE LIFE OF FAITH

I have been numbered among the Catholic laity, that large group defined by what it is not, since 1968. That was the year a languid reading of *The Seven Storey Mountain* detonated a God-device hidden so deeply within me that I had thought it was a mere question mark, and not — as it turned out — a direct call to seek the Lord at some personal expense.

The initial blast and fallout from that nuclear family explosion have left my husband and me irreparably changed, even damaged, in the world but not of it, scarred survivors of the Christian message which is Paschal: through death to life. As basically conservative, I am theoretically supportive of the church hierarchy, yet no bishops' press release issued from a synod in Rome is likely to explode in my heart the way contemplation did. Giving no thought at all to our "role" in the church, we simply made a commitment to God as we found him in the monastic tradition. Then, with four small children and in nomadic fashion, we violently bore it away to Kentucky, finally settling as neighbors to the Abbey of Gethsemani where Merton had made his stability.

We were there for ten good, hard years and went through a rich, though unofficial, formation in Cistercian ways. As founders of a small intentional community — Families of St. Benedict — we immersed ourselves in genuine experiences of prayer, poverty, hospitality, manual labor, primitive living, (and I stress the word *primitive*), liturgy, spiritual direction, and communion with others. We also failed miserably. At the end of that time, the community was in shambles and so were more than half our relationships, including the one my husband and I had with each other. In trying to be saints, we had overreached ourselves, deeply disappointing others who deeply disappointed us. Not only that, but now it was over. As one of our daughters succinctly put it in her college admission essay, "After a lot of talk and hard feelings, the community ended." Our throats felt like open graves.

In 1982 we moved to Brooklyn. If Adam and Eve had been kicked out of Paradise they could always move to the big city and join a regular parish like regular laity with regular jobs. (I decided it was about time my children learned the truth about indoor plumbing. It smells. It brings bathroom odors right inside the house instead of leaving them in the backyard where they belong.) There, there. The real truth was how much we were hurting. And when my husband was offered a teaching job at a New York university, we felt a change of scene might help us heal. We were not attracted to the city, but neither were we oblivious to this possible turn of fortune. Making an act of trust that we weren't being *lured* to New York, we packed a U-Haul and began re-entry into middle-class life with a passel of kids who couldn't remember a thing about it. It turned out they learned a lot more quickly than I did. It's no exaggeration to say it took me a whole winter to stop collecting kindling off the street — "just too good to pass up" — then looking for people who could burn it, because with my own wood stove left back in Kentucky, I sure couldn't.

So almost everything has changed, and I think about it a lot, about whether I meet God differently from before or whether these transformations are superficial, like clothing. Determined hospitality, for instance, was replaced by determined effort in school. In 1985, I became a registered nurse and now offer hospitality to the potentially suicidal and homicidal in a large and very disturbing hospital environment. That switch seems more than even. But what about the restaurants and travel, the culture and entertainment of my new upscale life?

EDITOR'S NOTE: In July, *Commonweal* began a series in anticipation of this coming October's synod on the laity. We asked a number of lay people to reflect on how their Catholic faith is lived out daily, particularly in the workplace. What ethical parameters and spiritual viewpoints do they bring to work and take home? Our third contributor is Marylee Mitcham, a nurse and the author of *An Accidental Monk: Her Domestic Search for God*.

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Are they adequately offset by the fact we still don't own a television or a car, by my attempt to buy everything short of underpants second-hand? By occasionally volunteering a night at the St. James Cathedral women's shelter? I doubt it. I lead a life far more self-indulgent than before, though in certain respects more humble because I don't hobnob with my friends "the monks and nuns" in rarefied surroundings.

Needless to say, there is much spiritual poverty in New York, and for every beautiful sight, like my church, an hour's subway ride away, there are numerous crummy sights within walking distance. And there is corruption here beyond what I have known before. A hospital — my hospital at least — is the antithesis of a monastery. It stands in absolute contrast. If Carl Jung is right, that hurry is "not *of* the Devil but *is* the Devil," then we so-called healers are in big trouble. There is no time to do anything right. If precious minutes are found, they are mostly stolen from the patients themselves, who are such examples of suffering humanity that they expect the loss as their due. And they are trained to it right away, with a good portion of verbal abuse, though every now and then one of them *will say* that the emperor has no clothes, proving once again that they are only crazy but not stupid.

Yet there are some Christians serving in this shamelessly dishonest, exploitive place. Happily for me, the director of psychiatric nursing is one of them. She became known to me when I happened into a Mass during my lunch break one day while I was staff nurse on a rehabilitation unit. She, her husband, and young adopted daughter were presenting the hospital chapel with its own statue of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in thanksgiving for a miracle. This successful administrator, herself a middle-aged R.N., had prayed to Mother Seton on her feast day for a second child to adopt. And a year to the day later, these believing people were bringing him home. Let all the world know. It was a miracle! I was very moved to be present at this living crèche scene, so anomalous in that abortive environment. The memory still gives me strength at work.

Why am I a nurse? To do good and also earn money? To earn money and also do good? I am getting paid for practicing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which as a Christian I have to practice whether I get paid or not. Actually, mercy is my hidden agenda. I am hired to be swift of hand, to help the hospital process its clientele as rapidly and non-litigiously as possible. I'm a mere cog in the machine, too insignificant so far to rate my own locker at work. I carry tons of keys, a sure sign of power, but am given nowhere to put my coat and backpack. I'm too proud to ask anyone to share their locker with me, and so far no one has volunteered. There is great resistance to new people who smell of reform. Should it take three months to learn a person's name? Recently called Mary Lou for the fiftieth time, I corrected the mistake — only to hear a sharp "I like Mary Lou better."

This Mary Lou has taken her knocks. I have been openly sneered at as "Florence Nightingale" on one occasion and a "racist cracker" on another. Not by a patient, I might add. As

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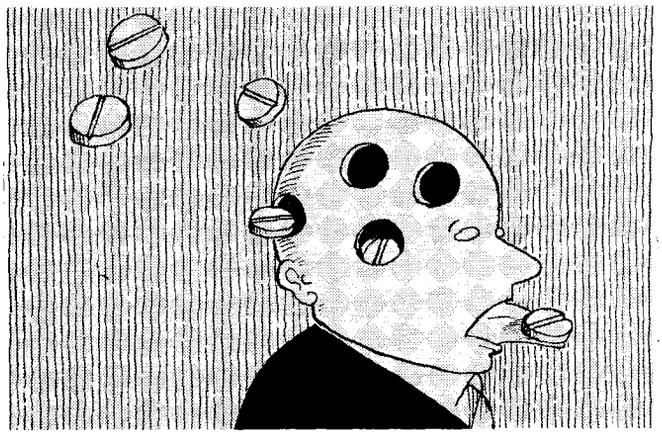
angry as it makes me feel, I believe it's a good opportunity. It allows me to fulfill Christ's injunction: pray for those who persecute you. The minute I write those words, I feel deep embarrassment at how minimal is the persecution I have ever experienced and how untested my capacity for charity really is. But we start with what we're given to start with. Modest as those victories may be, they bring joy in their wake. Capable of taking deep offense according to my nature, I am also capable of letting it go according to God's grace. Now this *is* exciting — to see in oneself evidence of a preference for love. To sense the action of the Holy Spirit — "not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me. . . ." And when I am not able to choose charity, to watch the way it frequently chooses me through its action in others, sometimes sent as an apology from my loudest critic.

Nursing is such a noble profession, but too often a sad one. In my unit the staff is as spiritually needy as the patients. Before you can get to the sick themselves, you have this enormous stumbling block of burned-out caretakers who eat too much, smoke too much, and generally operate as though everything, including the patients, is the last straw. Partly this is style, partly self-defense. It's a lot of things that are understandable, but it's not therapeutic. On the contrary, it's self-destructive as Hell. Why do they do this to themselves? For money? Certainly their idea of treating themselves well seems to revolve around getting more of the stuff. Forgive me if this is too harsh, but that's the way it looks. After a year of full-time work, I was crispy at the edges myself, so I quit for a few months. Then I went back only part-time. Not everyone can afford to do that, I agree, but more can do so than are willing to admit it. Some people are adrenaline junkies; others say things like, "Well, it was stay at home and watch T.V. all evening or come to work and earn some money." Good possibilities for leisure lie fallow, though laziness on the job is also a pervasive problem. If time is viewed as money, not treasure, it better be taken at work!

Finally and most importantly in all this are the patients themselves. It is not easy to romanticize a flighty, manipulative teenager four months pregnant who has stabbed herself in the belly with a kitchen knife to test her boyfriend's love. Or an elderly and likable con man who has continued, after years of therapy, to "talk the talk" rather than "walk the walk." These



are my borderline patients (often heavily into drugs), the ones whose syntax is still easily understood but whose lives appear shattered. I don't know how to help these people — because I have not fully learned to avoid judging them. In a sense, it is they who help me, by affording the opportunity of this insight.

Then there are other patients — some of them deeply delusional and helpless — who shine with meaning, who are like Gospel parables brought to life, who are so transparent in their response to kindness or its opposite, that it is easy to see Christ in them. It is sometimes possible to help these people in small ways. I think of one woman who said she couldn't sleep in her bed anymore because someone had practiced Voodoo in her room causing waves of heat to emanate from the floor. She stood before me clutching her pillow and looking hopeful that I would switch her room. Instead I chose to banish the forces of Voodoo. We stood rather dramatically on the hot spot, and, with joined hands, consecrated the room and its inhabitants to the "Power of Good." Believing in my strength and desire to help her, she got a good night's sleep. As nursing practice, this ranks as questionable. I took a chance though, and am glad I did.

I had another patient whom I overlooked for a long time because he didn't speak and was mostly observed in mildly catatonic positions. Then one day a little extra care paid off. This man needed an injection and I went to him before my lunch break to confide I would give it when I returned. I've discovered it's considerate to warn people; it helps them respond better. "What is it?" he asked, and I almost jumped at the sound of his voice. I told him the drug. "How many milligrams?" My answer apparently satisfied him, because he said "All right" and went back to an uncomfortable rigidity. We had begun to relate. A few days later I actually saw him tying another patient's shoes. "Thanks a lot," I said, shivering at the sight. "That's a good thing to do." And he didn't whip his head in the other direction to avoid me. I was heartened, spiritually nourished if you will; yet, to take "extra care" at work is to be called "obsessive-compulsive." Helping people is not seen as the issue, although patients themselves know when you're on their side; they're often brave enough to risk what little self they have in an attempt to connect with you.

But what do we really know about them? If someone comes to me and shyly gives me a button "for good luck," that person may well be Christ handing me the only thing that matters. Things are not what they seem. In a mental ward, they are *twice* not what they seem, which sometimes adds up to prophecy. True, there may be few miracle cures, because in this life we pass through death, often in drawn-out stages. But our faith tells us the end of all death is life, and that's the real miracle cure. For those of us who have had the Good News preached to us and will never be the same again, the search for that life is the road to Heaven and health. And truly, its evidence lies all around us in our own debris, a constant reminder that all will be well.

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A RECORD THAT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

PRINCIPLE, PRECEDENT, & PREDICTABILITY

FRANCIS FLAHERTY

Thumbs down on Robert H. Bork. But first a story to clear the air:

The lame-duck president announces his Supreme Court nominee, a lawyer and jurist of sterling credentials. The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, a member of the opposition party, wholly dislikes the political tint of the nominee. He and his party consequently deploy every parliamentary tactic available to thwart the nomination: delaying and drawing out the hearings, stretching the Thanksgiving and Christmas recesses, filibustering the matter once it hits the Senate floor. The ruse works. The nomination is eventually withdrawn.

A scenario for 1987? No. This was 1968, when Lyndon Johnson nominated his liberal soulmate, Abe Fortas, to succeed Earl Warren as chief justice. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) was the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and the result of his and his party's deft use of parliamentary procedures was the ascendancy of *their* ideological soulmate, Warren Burger, to the top judicial spot in the land.

The debate over Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork is an embarrassment of political posturing on both sides of the aisle. But the claim by Bork supporters that the Senate must lightly scrutinize the nominee, merely ascertaining his professional competence and ensuring that his views are not wholly off the judicial map, has made the matter particularly murky. And the claim is wrong. As the Fortas story suggests, full Senate scrutiny of Court nominees, including their philosophy and politics, and rejection or confirmation based thereon, is both historically common and constitutionally valid.

How typical is the Fortas affair? From George Washington to Richard Nixon, "Almost one out of every five nominees to the Court has failed to gain the Senate's consent," wrote Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe in *God Save This Honorable Court* (1985). "No other nomination that a president makes receives more rigorous scrutiny." The Senate rejection of John Rutledge in 1795, Tribe continued, "began a tradition of inquiry into the political views and public positions of candidates for the Court."

Is this common practice constitutionally correct? Yes. Article II of the Constitution provides that the president "shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint, . . . Judges of the Supreme Court." One needn't be schooled in legal exegesis to perceive that this is a joint process, with neither branch assigned a greater role. If anything, constitutional history suggests the Senate may have the weightier voice. The debate in the Constitutional Convention over Court appointments focused on two alternatives: congressional or Senate election of justices, or Senate confirmation of presidential nominees. That the president would have the sole, or predominant, part in Supreme Court selections was never a serious proposal.

An equal Senate role in these appointments makes constitutional sense in other ways. It is consistent with the constitutional scheme of checks and balances, which requires the concurrence of two and sometimes three branches before government action can be taken. If, for instance, a president must sign each of the thousands of bills that Congress passes before the bills become law, how much more important to the constitutional vision is the concurrence of the branches when the issue is the appointment of a life-tenured member of the third and coordinate branch? This theory also explains the light Senate scrutiny accorded nominees for executive branch positions. In such intra-branch matters, a president deserves to have his own choice within broad parameters of acceptability.

Put another way, in our democracy the bestowal of a Supreme Court justiceship is a signal event, deserving of as much democratic input as possible. As the people's choice, President Reagan deserves to and will have his influence on the process; the Senate cannot move until he nominates someone. But the same citizens who chose Reagan also elected a Senate that is Democratic by a count of fifty-four to forty-six Republicans. The only democratically authorized replacement for Lewis Powell — he or she will be our nation's 107th Court justice — is one acceptable to both the Republican administration and the Democratic Senate.

FRANCIS FLAHERTY *is a legal journalist who was formerly the national editor of* The National Law Journal. *He is a contributing editor of* The Progressive *magazine. He has written on church-state issues for* Commonweal.

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There are some things to like about Robert Bork, who has served for the past five years on one of the nation's most prestigious appellate courts, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. For one, he boasts a mighty résumé: Chancellor Kent Professor of Law and Alexander M. Bickel Professor of Law at Yale School; solicitor general and acting attorney general in the Nixon administration; antitrust scholar. His service in the Justice Department was of course marked by his firing of special prosecutor Archibald Cox, at the behest of Richard Nixon, in the midst of Watergate.

No dummy, then. Nor is he an invariable right-wing ideologue. In recent years, he has opposed such pet conservative initiatives as the balanced-budget amendment and the "court-stripping" bills that would have circumvented *Roe v. Wade* by removing abortion cases from federal court jurisdiction. He has paid for these positions: For a time, he was on a conservative blacklist for appointment to the Supreme Court seat now occupied by Antonin Scalia because of his congressional testimony against the court-stripping bills.

But Judge Bork still sits on the far right. And, understanding that they are authorized by history and the Constitution to do so, every senator who sits on the left of the far right should reject his nomination because of his politico-judicial preferences.

Those preferences are not hard to prove. For instance, Judge Bork strongly disapproves of the constitutional right to privacy established by the Supreme Court twenty-two years ago in *Griswold v. Connecticut*. In that case, the Court held that a Connecticut couple could not be jailed for using birth control in their own home. In an opinion by William O. Douglas, the Court held that, while there is no explicit right of privacy in the Constitution, the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Ninth Amendments have "penumbras" and "emanations" that comprise a constitutional zone of privacy within which the government cannot intrude. That zone is a complex of intimacies, implicating the family, the home, contraception, and reproduction.

Since *Griswold*, the Court has expanded the privacy right. It has extended the right to use contraceptives to unmarried persons; established the right of women to have abortions in *Roe v. Wade* and subsequent cases; and found a right of families to live together in *Moore v. City of East Cleveland* and other rulings. Indeed, many hope that in time the Court will enlarge the zone of privacy still further, to include such areas as sexual orientation.

But Judge Bork will have none of that because he detects no penumbras, no emanations, and no right of privacy in the Constitution. Under his banner of "judicial restraint," Judge Bork believes that judges should not extract from the Constitution any rights that cannot be fairly derived from the document's text, history, and the intent of the Framers. *Griswold* is an "utterly specious" and "unprincipled" ruling, he declared six years after the decision was handed down.

At this juncture, Bork supporters quickly stress that their man's judicial conservatism means that he respects precedent. By this they mean that his placement on the Court will not automatically mean the reversal of *Griswold* and *Roe v. Wade* and the roping off of the zone of privacy. Perhaps true, but no one can fault women, single people, families, and others if they'd rather not take the chance. This is particularly so in light of Judge Bork's recent conversation with Senator Bob Packwood (R-Oreg.), an outspoken advocate of abortion rights and a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Judge Bork told the senator that he would have dissented in *Roe v. Wade* had he been on the Court. Packwood then asked him about his treatment of precedent. "He said certain precedents were so fixed, some issues so settled, that regardless of how you felt about them you shouldn't vote to overrule them," Senator Packwood told the *New York Times*. "He did not include *Roe v. Wade* in that category."

Even absent the abortion question, the right of privacy is a pivotal constitutional doctrine that provides a sanctuary of individual freedom in an age of growing governmental regulation and power. For anyone concerned about that right, Judge Bork's remarks to Senator Packwood should clearly offer sufficient reason for his rejection.

But on nearly every other judicial issue as well, Judge Bork sits on the conservative side. A sampler: He opposes affirmative action. He doubts the constitutionality of the Fairness Doctrine, the recently overturned thirty-eight-year-old Federal Communications Commission policy that required broadcasters to air both sides of important public issues. For a long time, he believed that the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment protected only political speech; artistic and scientific speech and writing constitutionally could be censored or prohibited by the government.

His theory of the proper ambit of government also takes

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suspiciously convenient turns. In 1963, he opposed the public-accommodations title of the then-pending Civil Rights Act, arguing that motel and restaurant owners had a liberty interest in banning blacks from their premises if they so desired. To enforce such a law merely out of the conviction that racism is morally wrong is an idea of "unsurpassed ugliness," he wrote in the *New Republic*. He disavowed that view in 1973, but it became clear in 1984 that his recantation may have been a mixed blessing. In a speech before the American Enterprise Institute that year, he saw nothing wrong in curbing the liberty interests of homosexuals through morals legislation.

Unsettling as these sometimes troglodytic views are, the recent surveys of Judge Bork's judicial record are even more cause for pause. In a study of his votes in several hundred cases, the Public Citizen Litigation Group found Judge Bork almost perfectly conservative. In fifty non-unanimous decisions by the D.C. appeals court, for instance, the Nader-affiliated group found that the nominee voted against the underdog a daunting 96 percent of the time. Twenty-eight of the studied split cases pitted the government against an individual or a public-interest group; in twenty-six of these, Judge Bork voted for the government. But in the eight suits pitting the government against a business, the judge sided invariably with the latter. "One can predict his vote with almost complete accuracy simply by identifying the parties in the case," the report concludes.

Even in the conservative world of Republican-appointed jurists, Judge Bork sits on the right. A forthcoming *Columbia Law Review* survey of 1,200 decisions by Eisenhower, Ford, Nixon, and Reagan appointees found the judges voted conservatively an average of 69 percent of the time. But Judge Bork, along with only three other Reagan appointees, ruled on the conservative side in 90 percent of their decisions. (The authors defined conservative votes as those for business interests and against criminal defendants, civil-rights plaintiffs, and public-interest groups.)

In a certain sense, it is disingenuous to voice outrage at the clear political content of Judge Bork's judicial record. Though the legitimizing function of the courts makes it a taboo topic, political values clearly play major roles in the rulings of judges of all jurisprudential stripes. No savvy Supreme Court observer, for instance, will have much difficulty predicting the positions of Chief Justice William Rehnquist or Justice William Brennan in any given case.

But there is a question of degree. First of all, the Columbia survey belies any claim by Judge Bork that he is a mainstream conservative. He is a good measure more conservative than Abe Fortas was liberal, and moderately conservative senators should take note of that.

Second and more generally, slavish adherence to a party line is bad judging and cynically endangers the legitimizing function of the courts. In 1978, Harvard law professor David Shapiro studied then Associate Justice Rehnquist's votes on the high court since his 1972 appointment. The justice's votes fell into three basic conservative patterns, and while the other justices had their preferred patterns too, Rehnquist was outstanding in his allegiance to his political druthers. This "unyielding insistence on a particular result," Professor Shapiro concluded, "appears to have contributed to a wide discrepancy between theory and practice in matters of constitutional interpretation, . . . to tacit abandonment of evolving protections of liberty and property, to sacrifice of craftsmanship, and to distortion of precedent." Judge Bork clearly courts the same danger.

There are different styles of conservative judging, of course. One of the three patterns Professor Shapiro detected in Chief Justice Rehnquist's jurisprudence, for instance, was a strong bias toward states' rights. Judge Bork seems to have his particular conservative patterns too, and liberals, moderates, and mainstream conservatives should be very worried about two of them.

The first is blindness toward bias. However maltreated,

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blacks, women, gays, and others will likely get no solicitousness at Judge Bork's bench. A former Yale Law School colleague, Dean Guido Calabresi, said a month after the nomination that Judge Bork "ignores the significance of discrimination." Judge Bork's opposition to affirmative action and his apparent belief that the Constitution requires no special scrutiny of claims of sexual discrimination are just two examples of this tendency, a tendency which ignores one vital function of the courts in this democracy: to protect minority rights from the inevitable depredations of majority rule. The United States is not a pure democracy; the majority can have its way only within the metes and bounds of the Constitution. In Judge Bork's United States, those boundaries seem perilously broad. Witness, for instance, his flirtation with the idea that the First Amendment protects only political speech.

The second theme is equally troubling, but oddly inconsistent with the first. Judge Bork seems to have little regard for the role of the courts as the referee of democracy, the institution that makes sure the game is played fairly. He has, for example, opposed the Supreme Court's ban on poll taxes in *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections,* a 1966 ruling. He has also criticized the "one man, one vote" line of decisions, begun a quarter century ago, in which the Court redressed legislative voting malapportionments that made some citizens' votes worth only a fraction of others'. Typically in these cases, state or local legislatures used clever gerrymandering to dilute the voting power of blacks, rural folks, or members of disfavored political parties. Judge Bork also has a stingy view of the standing doctrine, which sets out the legal requirements for a person or entity to sue. In one of his circuit court decisions, for instance, the nominee ruled that bipartisan congressional leadership lacked standing to challenge, on constitutional grounds, an action by the executive branch.

All these positions bespeak unconcern with keeping the pathways of democracy clear, with ensuring that the constitutional checks check and balances balance, with verifying that majority rule is truly majority rule. After all, if only people rich enough to pay the poll tax can vote, we have something less than majority rule. Judge Bork's lackadaisical approach to the court *qua* democratic referee contradicts his record of indifference to minorities. Why? Because this justification for the latter is deference to majority rule — a tenet he is judicially unwilling to protect.

What about Judge Bork's vaunted theory of judicial restraint? The one good thing about the theory is its proper quest for principles to prevent judges from reading into the Constitution anything they want. But otherwise, the doctrine, which requires courts to find in the Constitution only those rights fairly discoverable from its text, history, and authors' intentions, is hogwash. First, the phrases of the Constitution — "due process," "equal protection" — are too open-ended to determine what is fairly derivable from them. Second, sticklers for what Stanford Law Dean John Hart Ely calls "clause-bound interpretivism" inevitably confront anomalies that demand abandonment of their theory. For example, the First Amendment prohibits only Congress from abridging freedom of speech. Does this mean the president is free to do so? Finally, the many, elusive, and often contradictory intentions of the fifty-five Framers are impossible to determine. As Professor Tribe has written, "No collective body can really be said to have a single, ascertainable purpose or intent." As the surveys of Judge Bork's record prove, judicial restraint is just a cloak of neutrality for conservatism.

Why is it important to keep this former Chicago antitrust lawyer off the Court? Clearly, he signifies a conservative vote, and one vote on a nine-member court means a great deal. *Miranda v. Arizona, Mapp v. Ohio, Furman v. Georgia,* and *University of California v. Bakke* are just a few of the Court's more famous 5-4 cases, and in them one vote made the difference in such crucial legal areas as the breadth of suspects' rights, the constitutionality of capital punishment, and affirmative action. And Judge Bork's vote is not just a conservative vote; it is a radically conservative one.

Judge Bork poses a particular risk to the political balance of the Court, given its current makeup of three conservatives, two liberals, and three centrists. Associate Justice Bork would mean that the Court's conservative faction need only persuade one of the three "swing" justices to assemble a majority of five in any case. Moreover, Judge Bork represents the critical fourth conservative justice needed to accept cases for review under the certiorari procedure known as the "Rule of Four." The Court has full discretion to select which 150 or so cases it will hear of the thousands of petitions presented to it yearly, and Court watchers know that the justices' political battles are just as furious in case selection as in case decision. For instance, suppose that the New York federal appeals court held, under a novel First Amendment theory, that the right of free speech included the right to *hear* and that citizens' rights were therefore violated when a left-wing Latin American journalist was deported by the Reagan administration before she could deliver a speech. Conservative justices would of course be itching to grant "cert" and reverse the ruling. With Judge Bork on the Court, they undoubtedly would have that chance.

Judge Bork's benighted views and his threat to Court balance are sufficient for anyone with an ADA approval rating of 25 percent or more to hope ardently for his Senate rejection. But he deserves rejection for another reason: With all his theories of judicial restraint, he has no theory of personhood, and such a vision is vital for constitutional interpretation. In 1971, Judge Bork concluded that the First Amendment "does not cover scientific, educational, commercial, or literary expressions as such" and, therefore, the elected branches of government can prohibit or censor such speech without judicial interference. Though he later abandoned this stated conclusion, what vision of humanity permits the denial of whole universes of self-expression? For Judge Bork, people seem to be what's left over after the sectors of government have divvied up their constitutional power. Judge Bork has it backwards.

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BOUND BY THE CONSTITUTION

COURTS DO NOT WRITE THE LAWS

DANIEL A. DEGNAN

Law is an arena of ideas, Robert Bork says, and within this arena a new theory seeks to import into the Constitution a set of current moral philosophies. Bork's intellectual battle with this new constitutional theory is the key to his judicial philosophy: respect for democratic self-government and for the Constitution as law; a refusal to read into the Constitution current moral philosophies or systems; and a flexible, even generous interpretation of the principles and rights which are expressed in the Constitution or are inferable from it.

Robert Bork's writings have centered on two converging trends in constitutional law. First, the Supreme Court has been engaged in the most active period in its history. Second, while the country and the Court itself have been assimilating this explosion of constitutional law, some scholars have been urging the Court to define new rights of lifestyle and choice, to reform institutions of government, and to enforce constitutional rights to minimum levels of income and health care.

Building upon the pioneering work of the late Alexander Bickel of Yale, these scholars have seized upon two so-called "open-textured" clauses of the Constitution, notably "due process of law" and "equal protection of the laws." These general provisions are interpreted as a call to the Supreme Court to engage in creative constitutional adjudication to declare constitutional new values and rights not expressed in or inferable from the Constitution.

Bickel himself became alarmed at the extent to which the Supreme Court, without rationale or principle, had declared new values. The basic question is: Can the Supreme Court, whose authority is to decide cases according to the law of the Constitution, be justified in imposing new values not contained in the Constitution?

John Hart Ely of Stanford, Henry Monaghan of Columbia, and Robert Bork have said no, there is no warrant in the Constitution for the imposition of new values by the justices. Another answer, however, the dominant one, is the "noninterpretivist" theory. The theory, in brief, searches for the moral ideals or principles which underlie the Constitution and which give it meaning. From the ideals and principles discovered, the Supreme Court should develop new constitutional rights and values.

In an article published in 1985 and in speeches given in 1984 and 1985, Robert Bork offered a major counter to this theory, capping the debate he had engaged in as a law teacher. The noninterpretivists, Bork argued, would substitute an abstract, academic system of current moral philosophies and concepts for the text and law of the Constitution. By applying this philosophy as law, the Supreme Court would impose current moral or social ideals on the American people, ideals shared by the professoriat, but not necessarily by the people. In place of democratic self-government, in which the people, through their elected representatives, choose the values by which they are to be governed, the new theory would substitute the ideas of an elite, to be enforced by the Supreme Court.

A look at some leading noninterpretivists shows that Bork was accurate, even gentle, in his criticism.

According to the noninterpretivists, the principles they discover have force equal to or greater than the constitutional provisions themselves. Thus Kenneth Karst of the University of California at Los Angeles, writing in the *Harvard Law Review*, found "a principle of equal citizenship" underlying the Fourteenth Amendment's requirement of "equal protection of the laws."

The essence of equal citizenship, Karst writes, "is the dignity of full membership in the society." This means that society is forbidden "to treat an individual either as a member of a dependent or inferior caste" or to impose a "stigma." The new principle forbids, for example, the "dependency of women." And it creates a constitutional right of the poor to the fulfillment of just wants; it demands that "economic inequalities do not seriously impair the ability of the disadvantaged to participate as effective members of the society."

If this were an argument for public policy, or a moral argument, most of us would welcome it, although we would want more precise definitions and more analysis. This is not Karst's intention, however. Karst is proposing that these prin-

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ciples of constitutional law become rights enforced by the Supreme Court.

Owen Fiss of Yale, also writing in the *Harvard Law Review*, has called for a program of "structural reform" to be mandated by the Supreme Court. Predicated upon a "theory of legislative failure," Fiss's rationale is noninterpretivist.

Fiss calls on the Supreme Court to mandate reform of prisons, hospitals, public schools, the government bureaucracy itself. What authorizes the Court so to govern? Fiss states: "To simply postulate the supremacy of the more majoritarian branches, the legislative or the executive, is no answer, for, as we saw, the people's preferences are no standard, and there is no discernible connection between majoritarianism and the meaning of a constitutional value." Here, as Robert Bork and others have said, is a deep distrust of democracy.

Michael Perry of Northwestern, who has written on judicial review, is a leading noninterpretivist. Perry, a forthright and original scholar, states that there is neither a textual nor historical foundation for noninterpretive review in human rights cases. Perry looks, therefore, for another justification. He finds it in an analogy to the function of the prophets in biblical Israel. Our democratic polity achieves moral growth when the Supreme Court exercises a prophetic role, Perry says, offering a "moral critique" to our society when it declares values and rights which the people have not yet accepted. Perry views the Court as a "policy-making institution" which looks ahead to emergent principles in terms of which "fragments of a new moral order can be forged."

Perry forthrightly concludes that the democratic principle is not preserved in this process by the people's power to amend the Constitution or to resist in other ways; none of this is effective in face of an activist Court. Rather, the function of prophecy justifies infringement on the democratic principle. Perry is less forthright in his analogy to the prophets, lone individuals who confronted kings, priests, and people in the name of God's justice. In Perry's picture the Supreme Court as prophet holds all the power.

Noninterpretivism appears at its worst, I think, in Ronald Dworkin's attack on Robert Bork in the Nov. 8, 1984 *New York Review of Books*. Dworkin, professor of jurisprudence at Oxford, uses the Dronenburg case to attack Bork's rejection of a constitutional right to homosexual conduct. After Dronenburg, a Navy veteran of nine years, admitted to repeated acts of homosexuality in Navy barracks, in violation of regulations, the Navy ordered his discharge. The constitutional principle of the equal protection clause, Dworkin writes, is that "government ought not to discriminate against any minority when the discrimination reflects only prejudice." Having drafted a new version of the equal protection clause, Dworkin proceeds to apply it: "Superstitions about homosexuality have been exposed and disproved, many states have repealed laws making homosexual acts criminal, and those laws that remain are widely regarded as based on nothing but prejudice." Dworkin's new principle of constitutional law, his opinion about homosexuality, his dismissal of contrary claims as prejudice and superstition, and his confusion of legislative policies with constitutional rights combine to create a new constitutional right to homosexual conduct.

Judge Bork, by contrast, first pointed out that the Supreme Court in 1976 had summarily affirmed a judgment upholding a Virginia statute making private, consensual homosexual conduct a criminal offense. Rejecting Dronenburg's claim of constitutional right, Bork said: "If the revolution in sexual mores that appellant proclaims is in fact ever to arrive, we think it must arrive through the moral choices of the people and their elected representatives, not through the ukase of this court."

Robert Bork insists primarily on fidelity to the Constitution as law. Unless the Constitution expresses law to be interpreted and applied in a principled, rational way, there is no basis for the Supreme Court's invalidation of acts of the legislature in the name of the Constitution.

Second, Bork insists that the law of the Constitution is not to be found in moral speculation. Moreover, from Plato and Aristotle until today, there has not been agreement on a system of moral philosophy. The effort to enforce one will end in "constitutional nihilism," and appeal to the personal values and preferences of the justices.

Third, the effort to import new values into the Constitution embodies what Bork and others call the "Madisonian dilemma." The Constitution's foundational principle is democracy or majority rule, yet the Constitution also protects certain rights — such as freedom of religion and free speech — against majority rule. An expansion by the Supreme Court of rights and values beyond those expressed by the Constitution or inferable from it, Bork holds, would erode the principle of majority rule and subject the people, in large areas of life, to rule by the non-elected judiciary.

Bork's judicial philosophy builds on these fundamentals. It is not a right-wing ideology, and it is not a simplistic attempt to find original intention in the minds of the Framers or to confine the Constitution to problems of earlier times.

Judicial restraint and original intention, in Bork's use of these terms, refer to the classical position in constitutional law of Story, Kent, Cooley, and Thayer. As Haskins and Johnson, historians of the Marshall court have put it, the case of *Marbury v. Madison*, establishing judicial review, "presaged the development of a full-scale concept of rule of law and a deep-seated respect for the primacy of legislative power as well as for the concept of separation of powers." Bork would add that judicial restraint is not a signal for a crabbed approach to new constitutional problems.

In a libel action against the columnists Evans and Novak, for example, Judge Bork wrote a powerful concurrence joined by three other judges, supporting judgment for the defendants based upon the First Amendment. The question was whether, in what was otherwise a column expressing political opinion, Evans and Novak had reported a fact which could be the basis

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for the libel action. Opinion was absolutely protected, fact was not, under Supreme Court precedents. Bork rejected a mechanical distinction between opinion and fact, in order to protect free expression of political opinion.

Bork has addressed the difficulty of interpreting broad, general clauses of the Constitution such as those of the Fourteenth Amendment. The solution, he insists, is not to derive rights from current moral theories or from the personal values of the justices.

How would Bork go about interpreting the Constitution? One must search, he said in 1985, for the core principles and purposes of the text in the light of its language, history, and the structure of the Constitution itself. "In short," Bork says, "all an intentionalist requires is that the text, structure, and history of the Constitution provide him not with a conclusion but with a premise. That premise states a core value that the Framers intended to protect. The intentionalist judge must then supply the minor premise in order to protect the constitutional freedom in circumstances the Framer could not foresee."

To the frequent objection, "Why should we be ruled by dead men?" Bork offers two replies. First, the question is never asked about the Constitution itself, but only about claims to new rights. Second, when we understand that the Bill of Rights gives us major premises and not conclusions, the doctrine is not at all anachronistic. The values of the Bill of Rights are timeless, Bork says, and courts "must not hesitate to apply them to new circumstances." "A judge who refuses to deal with unforeseen threats to an established constitutional value, and hence provides a crabbed interpretation that robs a provision of its full, fair, and reasonable meaning, fails in his judicial duty."

At the risk of dignifying it, I should mention a charge against Bork, that he is a moral relativist who would be unable to grasp the principles expressed in the Constitution. The charge stems from a 1971 article in which Bork argued that the job of choosing new values would force judges to choose one value over another and so to rely, ultimately, on an exercise of personal choice. Using an empirical or economic idea of values, Bork referred to them as "gratifications." The description was unfortunate, but Bork was not offering a moral theory; the argument was designed to test a judge's approach to legal principle. In his later writings, Bork shows a deep concern for the moral sense of the community.

In fact, Robert Bork understands the relationship of law and morals and the distinction between them as many of his critics do not. Much of the law, to many noninterpretivists, is deeply suspect as an exercise of power, of "majoritarian preference," intruding on the freedoms of individuals and minorities. Bork, in contrast, understands law as an exercise of practical wisdom ordering the life of the political community. This exercise of practical wisdom is profoundly moral; its source lies in the effort to construct the common good, the highest accomplishment of justice, as Aquinas puts it.

Several points need to be made in light of the debate over Judge Bork's nomination.

- Bork is an intellectual whose views have changed and developed. A remarkable series in the *Washington Post* (July 26-28, 1987) has admirably traced the changes in his life and thought. If Bork were now opposed to some of the civil rights laws as he was in 1963, he would properly be rejected. In the late 1960s, Bork himself sought to impose libertarian principles on the Constitution. As the *Post* reports, he soon rejected both the effort and the principles, in part through a seminar taught jointly with Alexander Bickel.
- Bork is a strong supporter of the purpose behind the equal protection clause, guaranteeing blacks equality against discrimination. He thinks, however, that preference or quotas — in hiring or admission to schools, etc. — is a distortion of Affirmative Action and of equal protection. Bork's position is shared by thoughtful people, including many counted as liberals. (My own view is that need and other principles justify types of Affirmative Action such as programs for the admission of minority students.)
- Bork's writing shows no program for dismantling precedent. He has suggested reformulation of doctrine and has severely criticized Supreme Court opinions and methods, from his viewpoint as an academic. He has also pointed to views such as Charles Black's, that the structure of the Constitution offers a proper, alternative ground for some of the Supreme Court's more strained decisions.

Bork's respect for the Court as an institution and for its role in American life; his Burkean philosophy, with its regard for practical wisdom, experience and tradition, history and community; and his experience as a lawyer and judge all suggest that he would, as a justice of the Court, distinguish his role from that of the academic and take a conservative approach to precedent.

- It would be wrong if Robert Bork were defeated because he has considered the abortion decision to be an unconstitutional one. As the new *Encyclopedia of the American Constitution* reports, in an essay by Kenneth Karst, "the *Roe* opinion has found few defenders; even the decision's supporters are inclined to offer substitute justifications." "What is frightening about *Roe*," John Hart Ely wrote, "is that this superprotected right is not inferred from the language of the Constitution, the Framers' thinking respecting the specific problem in issue, any general value derivable from the provisions they included, or the nation's governmental structure."

The writings of Robert Bork and of the noninterpretivists call up my final point. The noninterpretivists propose moral ideals to be enforced by the Supreme Court. In contrast, Robert Bork offers a searching understanding of the Constitution and its history and structure, both of its democratic system of government and of its guarantees of freedom. Bork, in my opinion, would be a profoundly moral justice on the Supreme Court, faithful to constitutional law and constitutional rights, and respectful of the work of representative democracy, which is to construct the common good.

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THE PERIPATETIC POPE

PAPAL VISITS ARE A MIXED BLESSING

PAUL COLLINS

An entirely new phenomenon has emerged in the church — the omnipresent papacy. This has been created by the speed of travel and by the media, especially television. Pope John Paul II has exploited these new possibilities to the full. Previous popes have claimed a universal jurisdiction and pastorate; John Paul II has made it a reality. By the end of 1986 he had made thirty-two pastoral trips; in 1987 he has added trips to Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina and then to Poland, Germany, and the United States. That is one trip every three months since his election in 1978.

What is the purpose of these pastoral visits? The pope has said they are to strengthen the faith of the local church and to be a visible symbol of the unity of the universal church. Having intimately experienced the pope's tour of Australia in November 1986 — I covered it for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, saw every move on TV, and heard every word spoken — I can attest that there certainly were good effects for the local church in Australia. In a country which sees itself as "secular," the pope placed spiritual and Catholic values squarely on the national agenda. Issues concerning religion, church, and faith were widely debated in the media. The large public liturgies attracted enormous crowds and gave many people a sense of belonging to the church again, a pride in being a Catholic. And, as he has consistently done in Western countries, the pope made a stand for minority groups. He gave strong support to aboriginal Australians, stressing the worth of their culture and supporting their claim for land rights. He also emphasized that the Gospel must be fully integrated into the local culture and called for "a second evangelization." The pope's speeches were prepared in Australia and the changes made by the Vatican were insignificant. There was a sense that the local church really participated. The Australian experience can be duplicated in other countries. In India in 1986 there was a strong emphasis on the values enshrined in Indian society and culture, and during his twelve-day tour to Africa in 1985 John Paul told the young people of Cameroon that the Christian faith must be "fully assimilated into the language of other people . . . A rupture between Gospel and culture would be a tragedy."

In theory, at least, there is no doubt about the pope's commitment to inculturation. Two extraordinary scenes from the trip to Australia linger in the imagination. The first was during a visit to an ordinary parish in working-class suburban Melbourne. The pope visited the parish grade school. He sat in grade four with the children gathered around him on the floor and answered their questions. Peter Hebblethwaite has emphasized that John Paul is very much the catechist. He is, but he is also an instinctive master of media imagery. The spontaneity of the children, the warmth of the pope, the charming contrast between Australian and Polish accented English, even the difference in colors between the red uniforms of the children and the white of the pope created a marvelous television image. The second scene that lingers is that of the pope at a youth rally in Sydney. John Paul joined hands with the youngsters, sang, and kissed them. The pope's words were lost in the visual images. It was so good, the overseas networks picked it up.

Pope John Paul has great ability to fit into a scene and dominate it. A close examination of the Australian trip shows that images — settings and the groups with whom the pope identified (handicapped, youth, aborigines, workers, politicians) — were more important than what he said. Certainly, this visual approach is part of the Catholic tradition, for it conjures up the sacramental nature of the church — persons, actions, and experiences that symbolically make present the power and reality of God. Some critics have argued that John Paul gets in the way, that his personality obtrudes, and that God is hidden. But many who attended the liturgies denied this. For them it was a real religious experience — although any well-celebrated liturgy, especially with a large faith-filled community and effective music, can give participants a real sense of God's presence.

Despite all of this, the peripatetic pope leaves me with a deep sense of uneasiness. This is not because I think the papal tours will change the local church. As one priest remarked, such trips "are like summer rain — refreshing without lasting effects." Certainly the Australian church will muddle along

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much the same way as it always has, and one suspects that France, India, and Cameroon will not change much either.

But the tours effect a shift at a deeper level of perception, for they change the image of the papacy by making the pope seem *present*. People see him, especially on television, as an accessible and humane figure who stands for justice and for a return to traditional values. He is no longer remote, like the "quasi-divine" Pius XII, but a man of the people. Television focuses on John Paul alone; we see only *him*. Local leadership, bishops, and communities fade into insignificance. The pope has given a new lease on life to the papal monarchy. Henri Fesquet has commented perceptively: "When John Paul II visits France . . . one reason for his popularity is that, deep down, the French have remained monarchists."

It is not the French alone who long for a "monarch." It is a need deeply embedded in many people as they search for certainty in a world of shifting values. In all of this, collegiality has been pushed into the background. It is the captain, not the team, that is highlighted. Lip service may be paid to the authority of local bishops, but as Archbishops Emmanuel Milingo and Raymond Hunthausen discovered, there are limits to Rome's tolerance of local churches.

Many participants in papal ceremonies or viewers of papal TV feel an intimacy with John Paul. But the question is, are they intimate? Can you reach out and touch him? I doubt it. The problem is that the media create a false sense of intimacy — and this is especially true of television. TV can create a situation as images are more important than reality. A critical regression occurs as complex realities are reduced to simplistic slogans and ideologies. The TV evangelists are clear examples of this. An unreality creeps in wherein viewers believe that the image conveys the whole truth. There is a real danger of this with Pope John Paul II. People begin to believe the simple equation that the pope equals the church. This equation — the origins of which lie in the nineteenth century — cannot be sustained since Vatican II. . . . The problem is that a high-profile pope destroys the balance that makes up the reality of the Catholic church.

Human rights & Catholic rights

John Paul II visits the United States just as we are marking the bicentennial of the Constitution with its Bill of Rights. For centuries, Americans have thought in terms of rights — and should be proud of it. An American church which did not take rights seriously could hardly be called "inculturated." But this concern is also an American contribution to the universal church.

The Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (ARCC) was founded in 1980. According to ARCC's 1983 *Charter of the Rights of Catholics in the Church*, "the rights of Catholics in the church derive both from our basic humanity as persons and from our baptism as Christians." As Pope John Paul II prepares to visit, the organization proposes twelve points for discussion and action by Catholic leadership.

By their baptism, Catholics are entitled to be educated in their faith: "All Catholics have the right to follow their informed consciences in all matters" (ARCC *Charter*). An informed conscience requires that broad educational opportunities be available throughout one's life. In the Catholic church *there is a serious void in the area of general Catholic adult education*; there is a lack of comprehensive programs and limited access to the program-fragments that do exist. It is especially important that those engaged in ministry take full advantage of opportunities for continued growth: "Catholics have the right to expect all office-holders to be properly trained and to contine their education throughout their term of office" (*Charter*).

Unfortunately, most Catholic adults are forced to look to a short Sunday homily as their only point of contact with teachings on peace and justice, family life, Scripture, spirituality. . . . This puts an impossible burden on the homily and homilist. The burden is compounded when the pulpit is closed to knowledgeable people who happen to be non-ordained and/or, God forbid, happen to be women. Therefore, ARCC asks:

1. That each diocese, national conference, and the Vatican stress excellence in preaching; that the ranks of preachers be expanded to include all competently prepared persons; and that more thoroughly professional training programs be set up in every diocese.

2. That each diocese appoint a broadly representative Committee for Adult Catholic Education, charged with assembling talented educators and scholars to develop a comprehensive plan for adult Catholic education, its implementation, and ongoing monitoring.

Mindful of the 1971 synod of bishiops' statement that "the members of the church should have some share in the drawing up of decisions . . . for instance, with regard to the setting up of councils at all levels," ARCC claims that Catholics have the right to a voice in decisions that affect them, the right to be dealt with fairly, and the right to timely redress of grievances. Structures that could support these rights do exist, but they are inadequately developed and, for millions of Catholics, they do not exist in actuality. ARCC asks:

3. That in every parish and diocese the establishment of pastoral councils (and not just finance councils) be made mandatory; that these councils be representatively elected; and that they have real decision-making power so that responsibility for the community and its mission will be truly shared.

4. That every diocese have a tribunal to redress griev-

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Obviously, papal trips differ according to the area visited. In places where Rome has a clear agenda because of specific issues or because of the importance of the religion or country visited — such as Latin America or the United States — there is no doubt that the Vatican keeps tight control of what is said. There may be some local input, but the speeches are clearly designed to express the papal agenda. But in most countries Rome is content to go along with the local preparation. Media — especially TV — assume much more importance in developed countries. In third-world countries the emphasis is on mass gatherings of people. But the core agenda is always the same — the pope must be at center stage.

A focus on Roman leadership inevitably weakens the position of local leadership. His visits could be more helpful if they were much more low key — and less expensive — and if he came, listened, and learned and, after dialogue, reenforced the efforts of Catholics to confront local realities. But the way in which the tours are organized prevents any chance for input during the actual visit. Local participation has to be vetted well in advance. The sheer length and speed of such trips prevent any time for discussion, let alone a chance to stop and experience the local church or local environment. The pope covered the whole of Australia (a country the same size as the United States) in six and a half days. In another example, in 1985, he visited Togo, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Central African Republican, Zaire, Kenya, and Morocco in twelve days. One can admire John Paul's stamina, but the purpose of such speed must be questioned. Is it to avoid having to hear the local people, to prevent the expression of agendas different from that of the Vatican? Local bishops' conferences — which should speak for the local church — are marginalized. John Paul spent less than two hours with the Australian bishops as a group.

There is no doubt that the pope is a humane and kind man. But he is also a strong man with a clear agenda for the church. The human image belies a tough determination to bring the church under control. During the very week he was demanding

(Continued from previous page)

ances of all types according to due process (following the Canon Law Society of America). This might be handled by extending the scope of existing marriage tribunals, or by new administrative tribunals, both allowed by the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*.

5. That there be set up on both the national and international levels representatively elected synods of clergy and laity with real decision-making responsibility — along with the national bishops' conferences, synod of bishops, and the papacy — as ongoing constitutive parts of the collegial governance of the universal church.

The most pervasive example of divisive dualism in the Catholic church, and in society at large, is that between women and men. The resulting discrimination against women clearly contradicts Christian baptism, which equally initiates women and men into the community of the followers of Jesus. ARCC asks:

6. That every parish, diocese, national, and international organizational unit move immediately, within the present possibilities of canon law, to place competent women in positions of leadership in numbers proportional to their membership.

7. That competent women be appointed to all liturgical offices, within the present possibilities of canon law, in numbers proportional to their membership. This includes readers, commentators, cantors, leaders of prayer, ministers of Baptism and Communion, and Mass servers. (According to the respected book commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America, *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, Paulist Press, 1985: "The revised *Code*, unlike the 1917 *Code*, does not prohibit females from serving Mass.")

8. That laity, priests, and bishops through every appropriate agency urge the Vatican to bring competent women as quickly as possible into the diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopacy.

9. That every organizational unit eliminate all sexist language in its documents: "All Catholics have the right to expect that church documents and materials will avoid sexist language and that symbols and imagery of God will not be exclusively masculine" (*Charter*).

10. That every unit of the church adopt a prophetic stance on issues of social justice, especially concerning women.

According to the 1971 bishops' synod, justice includes undertaking "an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and lifestyle found within the church herself." It follows, then, that "all employees of the church have the right to decent working conditions and just wages; they also have the right not to have their employment terminated without due process" (*Charter*). Therefore, ARCC asks:

11. That every diocese set up a commission of men and women — lay, religious, and clerical — to investigate the labor practices of the local church, to make appropriate recommendations, to oversee their implementation, and see to their future monitoring.

Christian women and men must live the Gospel in the world, which may mean being a counter-sign to elements of contemporary culture. Hence, when attempting to live out the Gospel of Jesus it is vital

12. That Christians have the full support of the Christian community, the church. Christians, subject to error, must be open to critique and discernment, but this must be done with justice and love — outside and inside the church.

LEONARD SWIDLER

Leonard Swidler is a founding member of the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church.

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justice for aborigines, workers, and the unborn in Australia, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was beginning an investigation of one of the country's best theologians — a man from the center of the Catholic tradition — on the say-so of unknown and unnamed accusers. It is this conflict between image and reality that troubles many loyal Catholics.

I am not suggesting that Pope John Paul is merely a cynical power broker. At heart he is probably a populist evangelist. At Mass in Sydney, in a powerful (if overlong) sermon, he cried out to those who had strayed from Catholicism, "Do not be afraid! Come home!" He has constantly called for inculturation, demanding that the church must become an integral part of the local scene. But it is always *he* who is the evangelist. The ministries of others pale into insignificance beside his.

As a populist, John Paul's lifeblood seems to be enormous crowds. But there is a danger built into his style. It can so easily become a personality cult, a form of manipulative demagoguery. It seems to be precisely for this reason that Jesus was so careful to avoid it. While Jesus was surrounded by crowds, he was constantly on his guard against the cult of personality. He refused to allow the crowd to project onto him any political or ecclesiastical role. He avoided using the term "messiah" precisely because of its overtones. He always pointed beyond himself to the God who sent him. His influence flowed from the power of the Spirit within him, from the strength of his personal conviction, from the gentleness of his humanity, and from his intimacy with God. And Jesus — as the New Testament and the Catholic tradition constantly maintain — is the sole norm and final judge of all that is Christian and Catholic.

Thus I must admit that I think Pope John Paul's "pastoral visits" to the local churches are, at best, mixed blessings. They certainly give many Catholics a sense of identity, belonging, and certainty in a world involved in one of the great transition periods of history. But the problem is, does this certainty come as the result of a retreat to the past, through identification with the central figure in a powerful institution? Does it imply an abandonment of the commitment in faith and hope to live a Christian life and build up the Body of Christ in everyday reality? In other words, is it a failure to confront the very reality that the pope mentions so often — inculturation? Is it a failure to incarnate the Catholic Christian tradition in this time and this milieu? In my view, it is.

THE HERITAGE ABANDONED?

GEORGE WEIGEL EXPLAINS IT ALL

PETER STEINFELS

There is a conventional view of American Catholic thinking on questions of war and peace. It goes something like this: Throughout most of its history, the U.S. church had little to say on such questions. Critical impulses were subordinated to a nationalism that sprang from a combination of the immigrants' enthusiasm for their new land and insecurity about their place in it. Through World War II, the Cold War, and well into the Vietnam war years, Catholic attitudes appeared to be well represented by New York's Francis Cardinal Spellman, militantly promoting an undifferentiated "crusade against Communism" and wholeheartedly supporting American military forces wherever they were engaged. A few voices sounded different notes: Jesuit theologian John Ford protested the obliteration bombing of World War II; so did *Commonweal*, which also condemned the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Dorothy Day and the *Catholic Worker* preached and practiced pacifism. A considerable number of liberal Catholics resisted the anti-Communist fevers of the fifties. But only after the Vatican Council did these voices seem more than marginal. A distinctive Catholic peace movement finally emerged in opposition to the war in Vietnam. The bishops lagged behind both this movement and the shift in general Catholic opinion away from support of the war. Eventually, however, the bishops condemned the war they had previously endorsed. Another decade of uneasiness with U.S. foreign policy, above all with new waves of nuclear armaments, would precede the bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace. Despite shortcomings that the bishops themselves acknowledged, the letter — and the discussion it provoked — indicated a new, impressive confidence, competence, and maturity in the American church's approach to war-and-peace issues.

PETER STEINFELS is editor of *Commonweal*.

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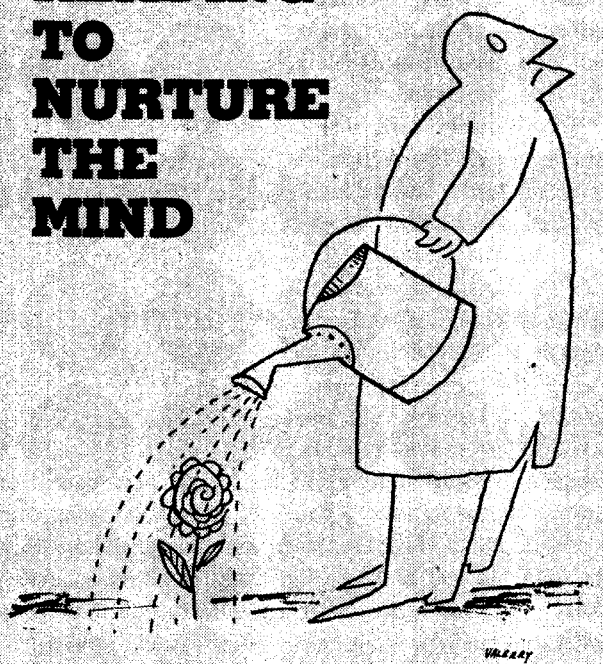

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This, as I said, is the conventional view of the matter. It is a view shared by non-Catholics as well as Catholics, by many with significant reservations about the bishops' letter as well as many largely in agreement with it. Now along comes a book arguing that this view is completely backwards. The older Catholic thinking on war and peace was not a frail reed, mostly honored in the breech. Even, or especially, in its American expression, it was a sophisticated, comprehensive approach that should have equipped American Catholics to confront successfully the twin dangers of the century, totalitarian oppression and total war. Rather than undergoing genuine appropriation and development by the American church since Vatican II, this "classic Catholic heritage" actually peaked in the late fifties and early sixties with the writings of John Courtney Murray. Since then it has been almost entirely abandoned by American Catholic moral and intellectual elites, i.e., by bishops, theologians, social activists, and the sort of people who read and write for *Commonweal*, *America*, and the *National Catholic Reporter*. The pastoral is less a culmination of efforts to give life, at long last, to the Catholic heritage than it is a crystallization of that heritage's abandonment.

The sheer audacity of such an argument is challenging. All the more so when it comes in a highly detailed account, some five hundred pages long, and backed by 1500 reference notes. *Tranquillitas Ordinis: The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace* (Oxford, $27.50) is the work of George Weigel, a neoconservative Catholic intellectual who has written a number of critiques of both the "peace bishops" and the pastoral letter. Weigel is now the president of the James Madison Foundation, one of the many fledgling not-for-profit groups whose efforts to uproot what they see as an entrenched liberal ideology have flourished under the current administration. The publisher of the Madison Foundation's newsletter is the husband of Jeane Kirkpatrick, and the foundation has received a $91,400 government grant to "raise the level of public debate," explains Weigel, on religion and foreign policy. According to a report in the March 2 *New Republic*, this means countering "the influence of the left in U.S. divinity schools. Among the concepts the Madison Foundation seeks to salvage are the 'just war' theory and the morality of Star Wars and third-world interventionism."

The reader who approaches *Tranquillitas Ordinis* suspecting a strong political spin on its theological argument will not be mistaken. Weigel has already attracted a good number of conservative readers simply looking for ammunition in this famous "war of ideas" between left and right to which neoconservative field commanders like Peter Berger, Irving Kristol, and Michael Novak have been devoting their intellects. Such readers are not likely to be overly curious about whether Weigel's account is actually true. That it confirms their existing political preferences is sufficient. Taken in this manner, *Tranquillitas Ordinis* will be ultimately destructive — destructive not so much of political positions that I would wish to defend and Weigel might not, but of the very goal he professes, to strengthen the "Catholic heritage" regarding

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issues of war and peace. Taken with a good deal more discrimination, however, the book may prove a boon in a dialogue that badly needs to take place. Weigel points to some very real problems, and at the core of his book there is a crucial proposal for the future development of Catholic thinking on war and peace. Even where he is most off-target — and I will make no bones about how far off-target I believe he is — his accusations may provoke Catholic peace activists to some useful rethinking.

The argument of *Tranquillitas Ordinis* has three prongs, one political, one historical, one theological. Only the first two will occupy me here; the third will be the subject of a separate article.

The political prong of *Tranquillitas Ordinis* is never frankly acknowledged, but it is evident to anyone even mildly conversant with current foreign policy debates. George Weigel shares the conservative and neoconservative view of international politics. The East-West conflict dominates all other issues, and the key to the East-West conflict is the inherently aggressive and expansionist character of the Soviet regime. With the Reagan administration, he wants to break "the vicelike grip of arms control theory" in favor of genuine "arms reduction." He favors "linkage" of disarmament to progress on human rights and other East-West questions. He sees strategic defense systems as playing an essential role in facilitating arms reduction and protecting against nuclear terrorists or "outlaw-nations" as well as accidental war. He would welcome a more receptive attitude toward the "discriminate and proportionate use of military force" in regional conflicts, for countering terrorism, and defeating Marxist-Leninist guerrilla forces. He endorses a strategy of not only resisting the external policies of the Soviet Union but of deliberately and visibly exerting pressure to transform its internal regime.

Weigel believes these positions are not only consonant with Catholic thought on war and peace but flow naturally from it. He also believes that he is not promoting a particular political agenda but using the resources of Catholic tradition to push beyond the present polarizations of policy debates. This is disingenuous. First, his idea of pushing beyond current polarizations appears to consist in accepting premises that can be described alternatively as neoconservative, Reaganite, or liberal interventionist, then suggesting their refinement, e.g., strategic defense systems are inevitable but should be developed in a "mutual or common security framework." Second, if one reads this book with an eye not only to the principles proposed but to the examples given (or omitted) and the sources cited, the congruence with either the policies of the White House or of *Commentary* magazine is overwhelming. Obviously something else is at work besides an extrapolation of Catholic teaching. Weigel is doing precisely what he accuses, with some justification, many peace activists of doing: using Catholic teaching to support specific prudential judgments that rest not on the teaching alone but on additional

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"political" readings of fact and history. It would have been much better if he had frankly avowed his political outlook and then done his best to distinguish, as the Catholic bishops did, his own prudential applications of Catholic teaching from the general direction of the teaching itself.

The second, longest, and sharpest prong of *Tranquillitas Ordinis* is historical. Approximately 70 percent of the book traces the rise and decline of Catholic thinking on war and peace, and over two-thirds of that 70 percent is concerned with decline. Besides a brief interpretive summary of "the heritage" from Augustine through Aquinas to the neo-Scholastics, Weigel surveys the American episcopacy's pre-Vatican II statements, the work of John Courtney Murray, and the discussions provoked by John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* and the Council's *Gaudium et Spes*. He traces the "abandonment" of the heritage by Catholic elites during the years of controversy over Vietnam and, more recently, Central America. He sketches six profiles of individuals influential in Catholic peace ranks: Dorothy Day, Gordon Zahn, Thomas Merton, the Berrigans, James Douglass, and J. Bryan Hehir. And he provides a critical portrayal of the emergence of the bishops' pastoral letter.

Obviously a tremendous amount of work has gone into this aspect of the book. With the help of two research assistants, Weigel has surveyed an imposing mass of literature. All this effort is impressive — and some of it is valuable. A great deal of it, however, is waste. The quality of a meal is not assured by the number of ingredients, nor is historical accuracy guaranteed by the quantity of notes.

The reliability of Weigel's historical account is no light matter, because these are no light accusations that he brings against the American Catholic elites. Vatican II had urged that the problem of war be evaluated "with an entirely new attitude." According to Weigel, that certainly occurred, but all to the worse. The framework of traditional Catholic thinking about war and peace had been the ideal of *tranquillitas ordinis* — rightly ordered political community based on assent and, in modern times, reconciling conflicting interests through democracy. For that down-to-earth political concept, Catholic elites had "substituted a host of confusions," from *shalom*, the full peace of Christ, to personal conversion and psychological harmony, even to New Left-derived visions of post-revolutionary utopia. The elites had turned away from a heritage of internationalism for neo-isolationism. They became less concerned with totalitarianism, including the persecution of the church in Communist lands, and the Soviet threat to peace and justice than with dampening the fervor of anti-Communism. They could barely imagine any "morally appropriate use of military force," preferring a biblically literalist pacifism to classic just-war reasoning. They were in thrall to third-world or New-Left perspectives, and minimized national obligation in favor of "global citizenship." Most decisively of all, picturing America as greedy, racist, violent, imperialist, paranoiac, or otherwise corrupt and deranged, they would conclude that the American experiment was not morally worthy. Indeed, "American Catholic intellectuals . . . would be in the forefront of that radical assault on the moral worth of the American experiment."

A sweeping indictment, and Weigel repeats it, with slight variations, dozens of times throughout the book. This is what his hundreds of references primarily to *America* and *Commonweal* are supposed to document. *Commonweal* is mentioned early in the book, in connection with the Catholic press's support for Franco in the 1930s. Noting that only *Commonweal* and the *Catholic Worker* dissented from this support, Weigel adds that "both . . . seemed more perturbed by the prospects of a fascist Spain than by the possibility of a Soviet-leaning regime in Iberia." Not only does this gratuitous suggestion of *Commonweal* (and *Catholic Worker*) complacency about the role of Communists in Spain have no basis in fact, the *very page Weigel cites as his source* emphasizes that *Commonweal's* anti-Franco position did not imply a pro-Loyalist one.

This point about the Spanish Civil War was peripheral to Weigel's thesis. But it suggested something about his methods. I began checking not all but a sizable number of his citations from *Commonweal*. What I found appalled me. Between pp. 206 and 215, for example, there are twenty-eight references to *Commonweal* articles. Twenty-five of them allegedly illustrate two dimensions of the abandonment of the Catholic heritage, namely the abandonment of its anti-Communism and realism toward the Soviet Union and the rejection of its faith in the moral worthiness of the American experiment. Of these I find that only five provided an unques-

For those not wishing to rely on my estimation of Weigel's bias, I suggest a simple test. Weigel cites *Commonweal*'s editorial responses to the Soviets' invasion of Afghanistan and the shooting down of KAL Flight 007 as terrible examples of, I guess, wimpiness toward the USSR and American intervention. Let interested readers check these three editorials in full (Jan. 18 and Feb. 15, 1980 — there were two major statements within a month on Afghanistan though Weigel chooses to quote only from one — and Sept. 23, 1983) and compare them with Weigel's summaries on p. 193 and p. 210). I submit those readers will find that, whatever the editorials' flaws, they have been grossly amputated by Weigel to fit a preconceived concept and, more important, they substantially belie his portrait of the psychological, utopian, anti-interventionist, pacifist, neo-isolationist, anti-anti-Communist, and anti-American state of "elite" Catholic thought. P.S.

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tionably fair representation of the material referred to or quoted. At the other end of the spectrum, a similar number of Weigel's references are hopeless misrepresentations: e.g., a column by Thomas Powers, said to ascribe the arms race to "an action-reaction cycle" spurred by the U.S., did no such thing; e.g., a report blamed for quoting some extravagent praise of Karl Marx "without criticism" actually was explicitly anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, and skeptical about the fulsome praise quoted; e.g., an article Weigel describes as "an essay on the flower children" was nothing of the sort, but instead argued a provocative case linking American violence to the self-assertiveness that was a national virtue. In other instances, Weigel proceeds like a hanging judge, managing to pass negative sentences even on articles whose main point he does not question. Though he obviously does not disagree with a column by William Pfaff stressing the glaring bankruptcy of Lenin's revolutionary legacy in Russia, Pfaff did not "think through what such restiveness within Soviet elites might mean in terms of Western policy." Pfaff, of course, had written explicitly on that topic elsewhere.

My own scorecard for these twenty-five references to *Commonweal* comes up something like: Blatant Misrepresentations: 7; Significant Misrepresentations: 3; Moderate Misrepresentations: 2; Fair Representations with Qualifications: 5; Unquestionably Fair Representations: 5. Give or take 2 or 3 in the middle categories. I don't think that would earn Weigel a passing grade in a graduate history seminar.

A history seminar might have warned him about a number of other problems that affect not just these pages but his whole account:

Double standard. Pre-Vatican II statements by the American bishops, despite obvious instances of wishful thinking and purely verbal solutions, receive the best possible reading. Post-conciliar statements, by contrast, are subjected to severe scrutiny. The tone of the earlier era's discussion of war and peace is represented by John Courtney Murray's "cool and dry" academic discourse, and contrasted unfavorably with the warmer rhetoric of the later period's weekly journalism. The fact that real adherence to just-war teaching, indeed even awareness of it, was much more limited in the earlier period than the later one is acknowledged but never genuinely factored into Weigel's comparison.

Selectivity. Although Weigel appears to be systematically citing texts from *Commonweal* and *America* to back his points, in reality he regularly ignores contradictory evidence appearing in those journals. On one occasion, I found him making an important point by conveniently relying on the editorial treatment of a topic in one journal and neglecting the quite different treatment in the other journal. In numerous cases, articles running against his argument appear in proximity to articles he does cite. Indeed, articles cited to support one Weigel thesis frequently contain material — unmentioned, to be sure — contradicting some other Weigel thesis.

Schematization. Weigel almost never focuses on actual historical episodes or follows out a line of argument in detail. Instead, he presents his historical material as illustrations of interpretive categories ("Human Nature and War," "The Question of Intervention") that he has already announced. Thus there is no examination of the extended internal debate in *Commonweal* that culminated in the magazine's shift from qualified support of the war in Vietnam to outright opposition, and only a cursory glance at the same process, which took place at a very different pace, at *America*. Nor are there detailed examinations of Catholic reaction to single episodes like the My Lai massacre. As Weigel skips from article to article, briefly summarizing and quoting a highly charged phrase or sentence, insubtantial items are equated with major essays; everything is flattened into a series of shrill, nagging points, nearly as indistinguishable as passing cars on an endless freight train. The underlying premise that the Catholic heritage was "abandoned" rather than, say, "corrected" or "developed" rests heavily on the impression this technique gives that the material under consideration is essentially superficial. Many of the columns and essays that Weigel pigeonholes so brusquely were actually thoughtful and well-informed, and cannot be dismissed without an analysis that is not forthcoming in his book.

Meanings, moreover, are frequently forced to fit the schema. Weigel contends, for example, that America's Vietnam policy eventually led Catholic thinkers to consider America itself to be "illegitimate." Now this was a view that probably every anti-war activist entertained in some moments of anger or frustration but which, outside of the Berrigans, very few fully embraced. Nonetheless, Weigel can write, "Themes of delegitimation came to the fore in 1967" — and follow this with several paragraphs quoting material from *Commonweal*, all very critical of U.S. policy but *none* bearing specifically on "delegitimation." A close reader of the pages that follow in the book will notice that despite much quotation of bitter and sometimes (although not always) unjustified attacks on U.S. policy and policy makers, there is virtually nothing demonstrating that American Catholic elites had actually concluded the U.S. or its government was "illegitimate." This conclusion is nothing but Weigel's assertion by schema.

Context. One would never know that Catholic critics of the Vietnam war were writing against the background of Cardinal Spellman's highly visible support of the war. Weigel's treatment of changing attitudes toward the Soviet Union never adverts to the fact that it was *China*, not the USSR, that Washington proclaimed as the chief threat to peace and the justification for our Vietnam stand. And what can one make of a treatment of Catholic reaction to the conflicts in Central America that overlooks the four murdered churchwomen? It is like an account of Carter's last years that left out the hostages in Iran.

"Stretching." There is a disturbing way in which Weigel alters terms slightly but significantly. He begins a paragraph,

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"In a similar vein," and then cites an economic explanation of the Vietnam war which was not, in fact, at all "in a similar vein" to what had preceded it. He first writes that the view of the Viet Cong as independent of the North Vietnamese was a "recurring theme" in Catholic discussions of the war, then states that this assumption "dominated" the debate — although neither of the key *Commonweal* and *America* editorials condemning the war, which he cites, makes that assumption.

All these techniques can be seen operating together in what Weigel himself proposes as the "decisive" change in the outlook of American Catholic thinkers, their alleged loss of faith in the moral worthiness of America. Weigel's formulations back and fill somewhat, but it is clear that he is charging Catholic intellectuals and religious with a root-and-branch rejection not just of American performance but of American promise: they became and "remain convinced of the fundamental moral dubiousness of the American experiment and experience." To indicate the end point of the change in Catholic attitudes, Weigel repeatedly uses the German spelling "Amerika," which the extreme New Left had employed to equate the U.S. with Nazi Germany.

Now this is a very serious accusation, and one notices that Weigel waffles occasionally by saying that the Catholic elites were *open* or *tolerant* or *vulnerable* toward "anti-Amerika currents of thought," or that they would "countenance . . . 'Amerika.'" Then, finally, he has to admit, "That spelling does not appear in any of the essays from the prestige American Catholic press reviewed above; but the message was similar."

The message was not similar. The Catholic press Weigel surveyed was filled with severe criticisms of many aspects of American life. Amidst racial conflict, urban rioting, assassinations, and prolonged war, there was a widespread feeling that the fault lines in American civilization went much deeper than the society had assumed a decade earlier. New skepticism arose about the capacity of the nation to carry out its foreign policy skillfully and justly. There were numerous calls for "limits." *Commonweal* writers, and I dare say *America* writers too, may have feared that the American experiment might not succeed — as had John Courtney Murray himself, and in calmer times. But virtually none believed that the experiment had failed decisively, or that it *should* fail, which is what the sixties spelling "Amerika" was presumably about. The operating assumptions of those journals toward, say, participation in American electoral politics were utterly different from those of the extreme New Left, and *Commonweal* regularly published sharp criticism of what could rightly be called anti-Amerika currents of thought. Some of this criticism is contained in essays Weigel cites but for other purposes.

Weigel's use of evidence here is a case study in irresponsibility. For example, to illustrate declining Catholic faith in the moral worthiness of the American experiment, he sums up a 1972 *Commonweal* article by writing, "Raymond Schroth believed that Calley symbolized an America off course, intoxicated by power, and debased by a sense of manifest destiny that had made it abandon its respect for human life." In truth, Schroth had based his whole concern with My Lai on "what radical critics would deny, that the American nation is an organic whole . . . with deep spiritual resources, the deepest of which is respect — based on humanitarianism and Christian theology — for human rights and the dignity of every individual" (March 17, 1972). Schroth's article represented not a rejection of the American experiment but the very opposite, a passionate determination that it should succeed.

Weigel orchestrates his case not only by twisting the meaning of substantial essays like Schroth's. He picks at minor items as well. Following the Christmas bombing of Hanoi (the context goes unmentioned by Weigel), a *Commonweal* columnist quoted a sermon in which the *Nixon administration* was linked to "the same spirit of Antichrist" that primitive Christians had opposed in the Roman state. Weigel deftly refashions this, "*America* as Antichrist." (My italics.) In 1976, another *Commonweal* columnist, in Swiftian fashion, compared the American propensity for arming other nations to a social disease spread by a "hooker with . . . no notion at all of hygiene." Again, unmentioned context: the columnist referred to scandals involving bribery of leading officials in several allied nations by U.S. arms manufacturers — an episode having lingering effects on Japanese politics even in 1987. Weigel is mortified not by the phenomenon but by the metaphor which, to be sure, he refashions: "*America* as whore." (Once again, my italics.) So finally he can sum up, in forlorn tone, the whole awful decline from the heights of John Courtney Murray: "From America as Proposition, to America as Amerika, to America as Antichrist, to America as whore: all in one generation." A well-turned peroration — and it takes you a moment to realize that not a single one of those equations of America with Amerika, Antichrist, or whore, actually appeared in the material Weigel cites. It is Weigel who imposes, here as with many less vehement passages, those extreme meanings.

There is something very puzzling here. Merely to read the first dozen or so pages of *Tranquillitas Ordinis* is to recognize an intelligence at work not common in much current Catholic discussion. Those who have heard the author at public meetings or even, like myself, engaged him in debate know him as an amiable, reasonable interlocutor, apparently serious about the requirements of civil discourse and Christian charity. How then explain the distortions and animus of his historical account, especially as it culminates in something as baseless as charging Catholic moral and intellectual leadership with radical rejection of the American experiment?

I would like to hazard a guess in a further article. But I would also like to attempt the more important task of seeing how Weigel's historical account affects the third, and most valuable, prong of his argument, the theological discussion of *tranquillitas ordinis* itself.

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HOMOSEXUALITY & THE PRIESTHOOD

READERS RESPOND TO RICHARD McBRIEN

Why & wherefore

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Richard McBrien has raised a significant, if exhausting, set of questions in "Homosexuality & the Priesthood" [June 19]. They go to the heart of the credibility of a celibate clergy in these uncelibate times. While I am sure all of the questions cannot be answered, there is one which, if answered, might assist us in ascertaining the scope of the problem.

How many of our clergy have resorted to a gay lifestyle or homosexual behavior because of psychological compulsion to seek affection and affirmation in the wrong places? How many of our priests have exhibited a disordered or maladjusted pattern of homosexual activity in an unfree, compulsive, or obsessive manner? Sometimes alcohol gets the blame for such a disorder. My hunch is that the system of priestly formation and existence can provide a cover for a furtive and fruitless search which might cause one to consider himself "gay" when, in fact, he may be very straight.

One of the correctives surely is to call to orders those who have demonstrated personal integration, a beginning of a holy life, and a competence in ministry which is demonstrated over time. There will surely exist a celibate clergy who number among themselves the hetero-, the homo-, and the bisexual. The option for a married clergy will support and strengthen a celibate clergy. A stronger church is anticipated when we squarely face our sexuality situation and utilize the research of Dean Hoge and others. I hope McBrien's contribution will be valued by all who can restore health and credibility to our priesthood.

(REV.) RAYMOND B. KEMP

Drawing parallels

Poland, Maine

To the Editors: In his article on "Homosexuality & the Priesthood" Richard McBrien suggests that the solution to this problem for the church is to drop its mandatory law of celibacy. Fine. But that gives birth to a new question: would married priests be required before ordination to promise that they would not practice birth control? For that too, according to traditional Catholic moral teaching, is wrong precisely because it is "unnatural" and is "the frustration of a natural act." Where, then, is the more ontic evil — in committing acts repeatedly that are not open to the transmission of life or in committing repeatedly acts that deepen love in a homosexual relationship? What's the difference and who determines that difference?

J. WILLIAM STEWART

Ambiguities & the author's hidden agenda

Aurora, Ontario

To the Editors: Richard McBrien's essay on homosexuality and the priesthood performs a valuable service by asking many questions in a public forum that usually receive only a hushed — and often markedly prejudicial — voice these days. With the questions, I have little quarrel.

Unfortunately, there is also a not-so-hidden agenda in the essay that, I fear, belies McBrien's contention that he speaks only as an ecclesiologist who merely wants to ask questions. His exposition strikes me as more polemic and classically apologetic in tone — albeit with regard to an entirely different topic, that of optional celibacy. This does a serious disservice to the issues and persons involved in the discussion of homosexuality in the church.

The questions raised concerning homosexuality and priesthood deserve to stand on their own *as questions* a bit longer than McBrien would allow. The issues surrounding priest shortages throughout the world and the church's disciplinary regulations regarding celibacy are equally serious and have their own set of disturbing questions. But to confuse or conflate the issues into a single picture, only adds fuel to an already overheated and often frankly homophobic reaction in many church circles.

In McBrien's effort, the very persuasive arguments about the church's need to reexamine its position on mandatory celibacy get confused with embarrassing innuendo about gay priests and seminarians. At times, it verges on the insulting. For example, to suggest that it is "not inconceivable" that gays are drawn into a safe haven in ministerial priesthood regardless of any serious attraction for ministry but simply because it "will always pose a particular attraction" does not sound like the conclusion of a disinterested ecclesiologist. It is a curiously

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"soft" psycho-social hypothesis and a "safe" premise for later argument. It is also, in fact, a pre-judgment of the sort that normally would embarrass McBrien, and rightly so.

Elsewhere, the suggestion is made that a person's psychosexual orientation must be a final arbiter in deciding which "causes" to support in advancing church reform. McBrien suggests it is "simple logic" that no gay person would push for fundamental change in the present discipline of obligatory celibacy. Such logic may be simple but it remains fundamentally flawed — and frighteningly so. It raises the old and dangerous specter of moral rectitude based only on narrowly personal gain. Does one, after all, need to be a Jew in order to abhor the Holocaust? Or a woman in order to work for greater rights for women? Or a layperson in order to work for greater participation for laity at all levels in the church? Does one have to be a heterosexual diocesan priest in order to "push for" optional celibacy? Could not a vowed religious order priest push as hard, even knowing that one's own life choice would not be affected fundamentally one bit? McBrien's "simple logic" here has become caught up in a polemic. It makes little difference that the cause is a good one.

Speaking of simple logic, why is it that only the "actively gay priest sends a morally mixed message to the church and to the wider human community, *to say the least*" (emphasis mine)? Does not the actively straight priest do the same under present circumstances? Ah, but one would argue, straight priests would not in the future if the church were to alter its position. True enough, for the future. However, there have been those who have been suggesting just such a rethinking and re-visioning of church teaching with regard to homosexual orientation and behavior as well; some have even counted McBrien among the more balanced advocates of such a revisioning in the church. Maybe we should all be more careful of simple logic; it often hurts even our own best causes.

A final note: when McBrien questions the vocational decisions of all homosexual persons as potentially ambiguous because of the "occupational respectability and freedom from social suspicion" that ministerial priesthood presently offers, he sounds painfully prejudiced. When he further suggests that we could secure the ultimate litmus test for "presbyteral ministry for the sake of the church" in optional celibacy, he sounds invincibly naive. Neither is characteristic of McBrien's dedication to the church or his typically open and responsible theologizing.

I write as a psychologist and priest who has spent the better part of ten years working almost exclusively with clergy and religious populations. Let me repeat that the questions raised here are, for the most part, good ones. I do hope the questions raised in McBrien's essay receive a thorough and critical airing: *as questions*. I hope, further, that social scientists, historians, and theologians will continue their efforts to shed light on the terrain, each from within a specialized arena of inquiry. But I also hope that some of the curious and spurious conclusions of McBrien's essay will be seen for what they are: premature attempts to secure a very good end by the use of highly questionable means.

(REV.) JOHN ALLAN LOFTUS, S.J.

Prayer brings men clamoring to serve

Los Angeles, Calif.

To the Editors: Richard P. McBrien in his "Homosexuality & the Priesthood" [June 19] raises a number of questions about the presence of homosexual men in our seminaries, in the ranks of our priests, and even among the episcopate. He then concludes that "obligatory celibacy is the most significant negative factor in the recent decline in vocations to the presbyteral ministry." He leaves one with the impression that with obligatory celibacy put aside, the church would have enormous numbers of fine, dedicated young men clamoring to serve as priests in the church.

I find myself disagreeing with most of what McBrien states in his essay, and especially with his conclusion that there will be no more priests available for the future to serve the church unless his recommendations are followed.

In my opinion McBrien is greatly out of touch with the local, pastoral realities in dioceses which are having a much different experience from the negative and grave picture he portrays.

Speaking from the reality of the archdiocese of Los Angeles, the largest local church in the country, I am pleased to share a much different reality. First of all, neither our seminaries nor our presbyterate is filled with homosexuals. Our screening processes, both at the entry level and throughout the man's years of formation, have proven most adequate to identify and dissuade the homosexual from entering or progressing through our seminary system.

We have an outstanding presbyterate, men of deep faith, men committed to their discipleship with Jesus Christ in its deepest context — including imitating the Lord's celibacy. The ranks of our priests are not filled with homosexuals. Rather, they are well-adjusted heterosexual men who love Christ and the church, men who give of themselves in fullest generosity to the service of their people. My only concern is their constant tendency to work too many hours without adequate rest.

McBrien quotes from a study done by Dean R. Hoge, a fine religious sociologist at the Catholic University of America. Apparently Dr. Hoge will tell us in his study that the shortage of priests in this country is not a spiritual problem, but an institutional problem. Although I have deep respect for Dr. Hoge and his work, I must disagree with this "purely scientific" approach and findings.

Fortunately, Jesus Christ does give us counsel about the shortage of workers to assist in the "harvest": "Jesus said to his disciples: 'The harvest is good but laborers are scarce. Beg the harvest master to send out laborers to gather his harvest'"(Mt. 9:37-38; cf. Lk. 10:2). That sounds like prayer to me — and maybe

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even fasting and penance.

We began a special prayer program here in the archdiocese just about a year ago. Parishes choose one day a month for special prayer for vocations to the religious life and to the priesthood. Over 200 parishes are now participating in this outpouring of prayer. And the results? We will have the largest entry groups both at our outstanding minor seminary and at our superb theologate than we have had in almost twenty years. Last year we had 80 applicants to the minor seminary; this year we had 140 fine young men from the broadest cross-section of our archdiocese.

Our "Called by Name" vocation awareness program is helping all our people understand that their ordained and non-ordained ministers are *their responsibility*, not just that of the bishop or seminary officials. Amazing things are happening, and young people are responding with eagerness to the invitation from their parish communities to discern if they might have a vocation to service in the church.

Recall what Father Andrew Greeley discovered in his study of young adult Catholics just a few years ago: he found that 10 percent of all young adult Catholics gave *serious consideration* at one time or another in their lives to serve the church in committed ministry. The reason few came forward was because no one in the church community asked them to consider whether the Lord was calling them.

Those who both talk about and prepare for a "priestless church" in this country have long ago lost their faith in the presence and power of Christ in and with his church: "And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Mt. 28:20). I prefer to place my confidence in Christ's promise and his abiding presence among us. I know that Christ's ways work; they are working here in Los Angeles. I simply don't have the same confidence in sociological studies, popularity polls, and similar "modern devices."

When we challenge our young people with the total Gospel of Jesus Christ, with the same call to commitment and to sacrifice, they are eager to respond. I see the same generous spirit throughout the seminaries of Latin America, Asia and Africa — where I have had the good fortune to visit within the past three years. Their seminaries and religious houses are overflowing for one reason: the church is alive and energetic, the full demands of discipleship are both taught and lived out, the notion of sacrifice and commitment are held out to young people.

The same will be true in this country. We now foresee significant increases in vocations to our archdiocesan seminaries and to several religious communities here between now and the turn of the century.

While both McBrien and Hoge rest their cases solely upon the "wisdom of the age," they fail to point out some serious problems with their "away with celibacy" approach. They forget to mention three extremely important points: first, will our Catholic faith communities really welcome a married clergy which, of necessity, will have much more limited time to be of service to the parish community? It's one thing to respond to someone's questionnaire by saying they would welcome optional celibacy; it's quite another to say "yes" to the reality of a different style and type of priestly ministry.

Second, 45 percent to 55 percent of all marriages end in separation, dissolution, and divorce. The same phenomenon will occur among a widespread married clergy as well. How will the parish community handle this new problem, a problem that will create far more difficulties within a parish than that of a priest suffering from alcoholism or some other difficulty.

And third, why do not our Catholic authors share with us the enormous problems experienced in other Christian denominations with their married clergies? The National Council of Churches and other bodies have both statistics and case studies depicting the enormous pressures and difficulties upon the wives of ministers, as well as upon their children. If a married clergy is such a panacea, why has it created so many grave problems with other Christian clergies?

The editors of *Commonweal* asked Father McBrien for his "ecclesial reflections." I find those reflections extremely

(Continued on next page)

Laying blame

Pine Hill, N.J.

To the Editors: I have heard gay people blamed for many things but for the perpetuation of the discipline of celibacy? Come on, Richard McBrien, you can do better than this ["Homosexuality & the Priesthood," June 19]! What kind of "simple logic" are you using?

I suggest you hit the gay ghetto and inquire about the married men who engage in frequent gay encounters. Married clergy would certainly be no panacea for the question of gay persons in the ministry.

As to the editorial staff of *Commonweal*, can you find no one in the Catholic church who can speak directly and comfortably to the gay question without dancing ecclesiastical circles around the subject?

JOHN RYAN

Grace & law

Santa Ana, Calif.

To the Editors: Thanks to Richard McBrien for the exploration of homosexuality and the priesthood. I offer a modest addition to his remarks. . . . I am convinced that the single most important source for advancing our understanding of homosexuality is neither single nor multiple scientific disciplines, but the gay community.

As a Catholic moral theologian I have many regrets concerning my community's handling of homosexuality: we have failed to recognize, rejoice in, and benefit from the experience of the gay community. Here, as elsewhere, we can only understand the moral law to the extent that we understand the nature of the gift/grace. It is precisely in mining the ore of grace that we grasp the law. . . .

JOHN W. GLASER

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(Continued from previous page)

wanting. There is a "better way," and that way was given to us by Jesus Christ himself. I would suggest that the ecclesiology of Christ's presence and promise are far more reliable than two professors at universities who are not in daily contact with the vibrant life of a local church. When I see churches filled with fine lay Catholics on their knees before the Blessed Sacrament "praying to the Lord of the harvest," then I am encountering the type of ecclesiology that leaps from the pages of the Acts of the Apostles.

The future of the church in our country is bright and full of promise — formed in the image of Christ and the Gospels, and following the tradition upon which we were established. We are on the threshold of one of the great eras of the Catholic church in the United States. Let's not dilute that promise and that future with short-sighted, panicky, quick-fixes.

I write this response on the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul. Their lives give eloquent testimony to the form of church which I pray for here in our country: a church unafraid to be counter-culture, a church committed to the total message and example of Jesus Christ, a church that is strong and courageous in the heroic lives of its members!

ARCHBISHOP ROGER MAHONY

Discussing the non-discussable

Bayside, N.Y.

To the Editors: In our diocesan paper an interview of Pio Laghi was carried in which the pro-nuncio cited mandatory celibacy for Western rite clergy as one of the non-discussable and non-debatable issues with Pope John Paul II. At first reading, I was upset that a transitory disciplinary measure of one part of the church was being raised to a quasi-doctrinal status by such an attitude. However, after I read Richard McBrien's article, "Homosexuality & the Priesthood" [June 19], in which he situates the question within the context of mandated clerical celibacy, my upset turns to grave concern.

I hope both Archbishop Laghi and the American episcopacy will ponder McBrien's disturbing questions to the extent that both will have the pope and Vatican bureaucrats understand that the current church discipline must be debated openly, honestly, and fully.

Although many of us applaud the courage of our bishops in standing up to presidents, governors, and senators in their defense of peace, the poor, life, and justice, we'd be more edified if they fulfilled their episcopal ordination and periodically stood up to the pope in dialogue. The Brazilian bishops are no less Catholic for engaging John Paul II when needed. American bishops cannot be . . . public relations advance men to the pope without courting the heresy of Ultramontanism, which denies episcopal collegiality and responsibility. Rome can't give every diocese a coadjutor!

Maybe this is the time to raise with the Vatican the disastrous policy of demanding celibacy for some Eastern rite Americans ordained in this country. We have an American Eastern rite cardinal; let him lead in that part of the issue which in the immediate past led to schism and today leads to anger and confusion.

FRANK C. ARRICALE

Only questions

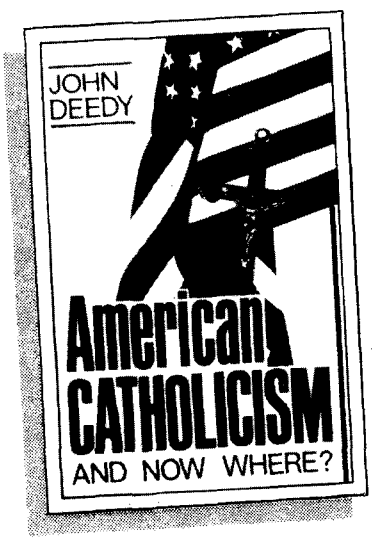
Millbrae, Calif.

To the Editors: Bearing the burden of church disunity and an absence of strong clerical leadership is tough enough. Richard McBrien's homosexual discourse ["Homosexuality & the Priesthood," June 19] only poses questions, renders the clergy suspect, and subverts the institution he represents. Who needs it?

JOHN THACKER

"None better qualified to write of American Catholicism 'Now' and 'Where'."

—Former Senator **Eugene McCarthy**



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John Deedy

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Bronx, N.Y.

To the Editors: Rev. Richard McBrien ["Homosexuality & the Priesthood," June 19] polarizes all his questions/considerations in terms of "them" (gays) and "us" (non-gays) instead of realizing that it is basically a matter of the same difference — with a great deal more of sameness, in fact, than difference.

His cheapest shot is his subtle and implied blaming of gay persons for the present and future shortage of seminary admissions. Lesbian women would . . . cause a similar problem if women were ordained because they too would take over, driving out the non-gays. Why is McBrien unable (or unwilling) to see that the clergy shortage is due to the moralism and emotional rigidity of its (mostly non-gay) churchmen? If McBrien could learn to become emotionally honest with himself, I think he would discover his own hidden homophobia.

Both gays and non-gays, on balance, have similar mixed motives for seeking any life work. Gay persons, like their non-gay counterparts, generally feel the same affection or ambivalence or dislike for their families, relatives, and male and female friends. Why does McBrien insist on making us appear so separate and different from the rest of the human family to which we belong?

McBrien seems to claim that marriage as an option for priests is an answer to the priest shortage. I heartily agree with him that priests should be able to choose marriage or celibacy, and I know that there are as many gays who would agree as there are non-gays who would disagree.

Why does McBrien allow for heterosexual priests to marry and thus be sexually active, while for homosexuals to be similarly sexually active "sends a morally mixed message to the church and the wider Christian community"? We who are homosexual have the identical need for close, intimate, self-affirming, life-enriching relationships as do those who are heterosexual. The option to marry should equally apply to both, or the present unfair (sinful) double standard remains. . . .

JAMES R. MURRAY

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

Richard McBrien replies:

James B. Murray (and perhaps J. William Stewart also) objects that I did not place homosexual and heterosexual behavior on an exactly equal moral footing, endorsing even homosexual marriages. I did not intend to break any new doctrinal or ethical ground, nor could I have responsibly attempted to do so in such a brief essay. I have been impressed with Charles Curran's careful effort to construct a theology of compromise on this delicate issue, but, of course, we see what he got for his trouble.

I agree with John W. Glaser that the church needs more dialogue with the gay community itself. Unfortunately, that may be more difficult now than both of us would have hoped, given some of our pastoral leaders' current determination to block even the celebration of Eucharist for largely gay congregations.

Three readers engage in the age-old practice of putting words in the mouth of those with whom they disagree. Contrary to John Ryan's suggestion, I did not propose a married clergy as a "panacea" for this problem, or any other. Nor did I say, as John A. Loftus contends, that "it is 'simple logic' that *no gay person* would push for fundamental change in the present discipline of obligatory celibacy" (emphasis mine). And nowhere did I even suggest, much less assert, that "a person's psycho-sexual orientation must be a final arbiter in deciding which 'causes' to support in advancing church reform." Loftus detects "a not-so-hidden agenda" in my essay: the restoration of optional celibacy. Do I detect a hidden agenda in his letter as well? "However," Loftus writes, "there have been those who have been suggesting just such a re-thinking and re- visioning of church teaching with regard to homosexual orientation and behavior as well. . . ."

Finally, contrary to Archbishop Mahony, whose letter rivals my article in length, but clearly surpasses it in fervor, I did not say, nor even suggest, that the church would have "no more priests available" unless obligatory celibacy were eliminated, nor did I "rest [my] case solely upon the 'wisdom of the age,'" whatever that is. Furthermore, his charge that Dean Hoge and I are out of touch with pastoral realities is one thing, but his suggestion that I have "lost [my] faith in the presence and power of Christ in and with his church" is a classic example of rash judgment. I should leave it to the Catholics of Los Angeles, both inside and outside the clergy, to let their archbishop know if they agree or disagree with his defiantly rosy assessment of their local church, its presbyterate, and its seminary system.

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

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THREE WOMEN

'MERMAIDS,' 'WISH,' & 'NADINE'

I've Heard the Mermaids Singing sings superbly on a shoestring budget. Its young Canadian director, Patricia Rozema, won the Prix de la Jeunesse at Cannes this spring; as writer, editor, and co-producer of *Mermaids* she ought to win an all-Cinema award for equaling her energy with intelligence. Her film has a playful but sure touch with "heavy" subjects such as Romanticism, femininity, lesbianism, and art; sometimes I laughed simply contrasting her wealth of insight on the last with that expensive Hollywood "art-world" travesty, *Legal Eagles*. The wise whimsy of *Mermaids* makes it ten times more serious and enjoyable. Indeed, it's one of the best comedies in some time.

Mermaids concerns Polly, a ditzy thirty-one-year-old, red-haired part-time secretary (Sheila McCarthy), aimless but free-spirited, given to roaming Toronto taking quirky photos of people on the streets. A decisive change occurs, however, when Polly begins work for an art gallery director named Gabrielle (Paule Baillergeon) whom she titles lovingly The Curator. "She was a fairy tale," Polly lyricizes, falling deeply into platonic love with her boss. Gabrielle is also everything Polly isn't: tall, blond, elegant, assured, ambitious — and infectious.

The acting carries the film over some dangerous territory. Baillergeon, for example, often exemplifies the pomposities of the art world as she discusses modernist works with rich clients and theory-sodden critics. But in private she talks differently, and in her best moment, drunk at her own birthday party, tells Polly of her real ambitions in a language so pure, so simple, it redeems its own grand clichés. What does she want of life? "Universal respect. Eternal youth. Passion that never fades. The usual, I guess. And someday to make something breathtakingly beautiful that lasts forever." Her world-weary lyricism is itself breathtaking.

McCarthy, narrating retrospectively, catches Polly's sweet, beautiful-loser quality without sentimentalizing it. Her best moment occurs when she tries to remember a phrase of the Curator's about unambitious people and "their half lives, half lived." McCarthy hesitates as she recalls it, unsure when treading eloquent ground. The pause incarnates her past in a nutshell. Her mastering of the phrase forecasts her future.

Director Rozema also uses some playful technical innovations that match and enrich content. The "film" in fact starts as a video, with Polly telling us the story by means of a video machine which (we later find out) she stole from the gallery; Rozema blends into normal color once the story is well underway, but returns to the video camera and its grainy, blurry images throughout. Added variety is provided by interspersing fantasy sequences in black and white; in these, Polly imagines herself as a modern Superwoman flying through the air, or, in the title sequence, as a mature sophisticate in Victorian dress elegantly picnicking at a beach where she hears the title's sirens. The variations in film stock, in short, are not mere technical games, but expressions of character. It fits with Rozema's satire on art: technique only derives its strength from a human base.

Other artists contribute to the wacky sublimity of *Mermaids*, especially Anne Marie MacDonald, as the Curator's real woman lover, and Mark Korven, who provides intense choral and percussive accompaniments to Polly's fantasies. But this is Rozema's film above all. She errs just once in cutting a scene involving octopus sushi in a Japanese restaurant. She may have also missed a beat in titling the Curator's collection "the Church Gallery"; it occupies the abandoned nave, and a few pews have been retained to provide seats. While credible as real estate fact, the church setting never attains any symbolic resonance.

Still, Rozema has made something special. This time, at Cannes, they made no mistake.

Wish You Were Here is a bittersweet woman's coming-of-age tale set in seaside Britain in the 1950s. Written and directed by David Leland, who wrote last years' superb *Mona Lisa* and the recent *Personal Services*, the new film uses its location to map a *social* coast, the border between middle-class propriety and boardwalk sleaze. Leland knows the indecencies of the latter almost too well for the comic purposes of *Wish You Were Here*, especially when he draws the disgusting character of a bookie and film projectionist (Tom Bell) who lives asocially in the dome of an oceanside movie house. The cold here is not from the sea but the heart.

Leland also uses cinematography (Ian Wilson) to portray this world's dirty gray boredom and the bright spirit of Linda (Emily Lloyd), a cheeky sixteen-year-old seeking both personal and sexual attention. She's always photographed in earnestly declaratory pink, orange, or yellow dresses; she's often positioned between walls or boardwalk girders that suggestively accentuate her imprisonment. Her rebellion takes the form of offending her elders with obscene but often witty impropriety. Bitingly amusing, especially in one scene with a psychiatrist, she has a silly, sulky way with crossing her eyes that makes one want to forgive the clichés of the plot and her role.

The film has several purely artistic weaknesses — a forced conclusion, an unconvincing fight scene in a tea room in Bournemouth, and Leland's failure to identify Emily's aunt. She is played by Pat Heywood, whom some might recall as the nurse in Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. Here, too, she provides some sad, worldly "wisdom" in the film's only strong scene in its second half.

The main defect involves the ideology that has won *Wish*

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You Were Here so much praise. Film critics judge the characters in this kind of movie on a simple basis: anyone given to cursing and crudity is good, anyone who believes in decorum and a steady job is bad. As noted before in this column, the really funny thing about secular liberals is the way they invert Victorian standards, then proceed to use their new dogmas to judge people as harshly as any of our puritanical forebears. Leland is too honest a writer not to concede some worth to Lloyd's father; Heywood gives it a moment's real force. It would be a refreshing dissent from hidebound convention to see a film that placed this at the heart of a "young person's" growth.

Nadine was dangerously titled. On the surface, it puts a young Texas woman (Kim Basinger) and her ex-husband (Jeff Bridges) through some comic perils before reuniting them in shaky matrimony. One could recount in some detail the succession of scrapes, the suave villain (Rip Torn) who bedevils them, the other woman (Glenne Headly) following Bridges around, and the nostalgia for the early 1950s that dominates the production design. But while superficially accurate, all this would mislead viewers about the ultimate content of the film. Unintentionally, it puns on its title: the content is *nada,* nothing, nullity, a giant zero.

Sometimes filmmakers, in different ways, strive to achieve such a state, e.g. Andy Warhol's minimalism, or action sensationalism. But *Nadine* was made by someone capable of much better. Robert Benton, who won an Oscar for *Kramer vs Kramer* and was nominated for *Places in the Heart*, directed the film, but fails to evoke the former's strength in dealing with marriage or the latter's power with Texas landscape. The vestiges of intelligence in *Nadine* are like the "cosmic background radiation" (plus 3 degrees Kelvin) left all over space from the Big Bang. What went wrong?

It starts with casting. Basinger plays an Austin manicurist with a drawl and set of gestures memorized from the Bad Actresses' School of Recognizable Southern Pouts. She manages no chemistry with Bridges except in one scene where she turns on her repertoire of sighs and whispers from such sultry X-rated films as *9 1/2 Weeks*. Bridges performs decently as always, but has little new to offer the overexposed role of a good ole boy with fond illusions about the future of his rundown Bluebonnet Tavern.

But when the acting improves, the direction undoes it. Torn does well as a villain less loud and savage than his usual redneck tough, but little is written to challenge him. One scene in a salvage yard almost leads to some grand, mock-chivalric nostalgia on his part, but Benton cuts him short. Where one hopes, desperately, for a romantic poem from this elegant bad guy, the director shapes a void. Even Benton's chase scenes and send-up of film noir don't work.

What was on Benton's mind? Here is a decent, not great filmmaker, who has never failed to produce something with substance and bite. Did he think, along with most directors raised in Hollywood these days, that comedy can't have it? His main passion in this film seems to be for locale, Texas, Fifties Americana, Lone Star Beer. As he showed in *Places*, he knows and loves the landscape, and can even write screen hymns to it. Did he think *Nadine* could live on nostalgia alone? A man without a story is lost even in such a country. Another name for *Nadine* is nowhere.

TOM O'BRIEN

DANCE

THE NEXT GREAT LEAP
MEASURING THE BOLSHOI

The Bolshoi Ballet's artistry has always been inextricably bound up with politics. Starting in 1703 when the capital was moved from Moscow, the company became second in importance. Dancers and choreographers vied first for appointment to St. Petersburg where the Maryinsky (today Kirov) Ballet enjoyed the favored attention of the czars. Marius Petipa, who set an indelible stamp on ballet development in Russia, began at Moscow's Bolshoi but flourished when transferred to St. Petersburg's Maryinsky.

Today that has changed. The cherished appointment is to Moscow and the Bolshoi. The capital city which was reestablished after the Bolshevik Revolution, exercises a magnetism for artists which has been abetted over the years by the systematic transfer of talented dancers and teachers to the Bolshoi. Two of its most respected coaches, Galina Ulanova (reported to have been Stalin's favorite ballerina) and Marina Semyonova, both began careers in Leningrad in the twenties.

During the Bolshoi's last visit to the United States in 1979, the vociferously praised Ludmila Semenyaka and Nadezhda Pavlova had been transferred from the Kirov and the Perm State Ballet, a Kirov spinoff, respectively. That trip was marred by the defection of Alexander Godunov, along with Valentina and Leonid Koslov. Irritation over these matters caused the long delay between that season and the present tour of the United States, due to end in Los Angeles.

In the meanwhile, a new generation of dancers has ascended to the principal roles in the company. With the major exceptions of Semenyaka and the senior Natalya Bessmertnova, the company presented a new line of top male and female dancers. Pavlova did not make the trip.

The one constant over the past twenty-three years has been Yuri Grigorovitch, the company's chief choreographer and artistic director. Trained in the Kirov school and a member of that company, he came to Moscow's attention in 1957 with a re-staging of Prokofiev's last ballet, "The Stone Flower." Leonid Lavrovsky (formerly Kirov) had choreographed a production of this ballet for the Bolshoi in 1954 that had been disappointing. When Grigorovitch was invited to Moscow to mount this version, it was as successful as it had been in

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Leningrad, and four years later Grigorovitch was summoned to take charge of the Bolshoi.

His special contribution has been substantially to eliminate mime and to replace it with pure dancing, thus cutting through the Gordian knot of gesture that was choking Soviet Ballet in the fifties. The move away from elaborate mime in favor of danced expressiveness had its roots prior to World War II in the work of Michel Fokine. That creative path was enthusiastically followed in the West, but was stifled in the Soviet Union where melodramatic "socialist realism" governed all artistic expression.

After Stalin's death in 1953, Grigorovitch united folk and classical dancing to alter decisively the, then prevalent, silent-film histrionics that had restricted movement to a form of mimetic theater.

Grigorovitch carefully retained a defensible libretto for each new production, eschewed subtlety in plot development, and steered clear of "formalism." The latter was and still is a serious critical accusation. It implies the abandonment of readily understood, upbeat ballets that celebrate positive aspects of the Soviet world outlook in favor of ambiguous, "elitist" productions.

As a result, the company has liberated its technical pedagogy to develop impressively gifted and expressive artists, while confining the exercise of their skills to mediocre twentieth-century vehicles for the most part. The nineteenth-century classics, in as far as they preserve their original choreography, have greater subtlety and artistic merit.

That even the nineteenth-century classics have not been entirely spared the new policy was demonstrated by Grigorovitch's re-staging of "Giselle," first shown in Paris last year. The Romantic Ballet's cherished practice of contrasting the naturalistic act against a supernatural one has been systematically eroded. Act I has been streamlined so that the young village women now dance in a manner that is closer to the ethereal Wilis (would-be brides who died) of Act II.

The bare essentials of mimed exchanges are retained to keep the story of the betrayed village girl on track. The peasant who loves her is given a bit more nobility than ordinarily to bring him on a closer social plane with the disguised nobleman. The mother's mimed warning against the dangers of unbridled dancing is eliminated and the Act I "peasant" pas de deux has a solo for Giselle herself oddly inserted into it. Act II, which has always featured the classical dancing of the malevolent Wilis, remains pretty much intact, though the sharp contrast between the real and surreal worlds has been blurred.

"Raymonda," re-staged in 1984, has the young heroine now dreaming about the Saracen knight rather than the Christian one in traditional productions, but all is resolved amid a continuous flurry of danced set pieces. "The Golden Age," re-staged in 1982, dates from 1930 and originally featured a story about Fascists, a negro boxer, Soviet soccer players, good workers, and corrupt police. This heavy-handed bit of agit-prop and its choreography were completely jettisoned in favor of an equally heavy-handed story about evil New Economic Policy (N.E. P.) exploiters, bandits, and pure-hearted young workers. The pure-hearted win out, but only a trained Marxist dialectician could explain why the sainted Lenin's N.E.P. is currently being vilified. The fourth program of the season featured substantial excerpts from Grigorovitch's "Romeo and Juliet" and "Spartacus" as well as brief *divertissements* from nineteenth-century classics.

The overall, physical look of the company now more closely resembles standard Western companies in its lean muscularity. Stylistically, it differs most in the emphatic expressiveness of its dancing. Semenyaka still displays the winsome lyricism that marked her out for special attention as the pure-hearted Phrygia, even amidst the hurly burly of Grigorovitch's "Spartacus" (1969.) Her not-so-pure-in-heart counterpart, Aegina, was precisely and sharply characterized by Nina Semizorova as scheming, self-centered, and unscrupulous.

The vigorous dancing of the male corps was impressive more for its high technical level than any inherent worth in the choreography. The corps continually presented a display of power and skill that, for many, make the artistic deficiencies of the ballet irrelevant.

In the title role of Spartacus, Irek Mukhamedov showed a noble bearing as the leader of the slave revolt, whether vaulting astonishing distances and heights or exhorting his own followers. He has an obvious athleticism and verve that draws attention whenever he is on stage. Aleksei Fadeyechev combines technical prowess with refined partnering that makes him an ideal classical dancer. His restrained power is particularly notable in nineteenth-century ballets where his manner and presentation reminds me of his father, Nikolai Fadeyechev, who was for years Maya Plisetskaya's favored partner. Andrus Liepa, most notable in Grigorovitch's "Romeo and Juliet," has the ardent eagerness one associates with a still maturing artist. Less concerned with picturebook precision, Liepa convincingly projects heedless passion.

Alla Mikhalchenko's gift for characterization found its most successful role as Giselle. She established early the young girl's infatuated commitment to the deceitful Albrecht and sustained it even as a transformed Wili. Her attack is normally quick and exact and she has the ability to modulate it for dramatic effect. With Fadeyechev, she danced glitteringly the "Black Swan" pas de deux.

A contrasting ballerina is Nina Ananiashvili whose *quatrocentro* prettiness makes her slide naturally into romantic roles. In "Romeo and Juliet" she was demure and innocent as she was being overwhelmed by her first great emotional experience. Her variation in "Raymonda" again showed to advantage her light, singing quality.

The company is strong at the top and throughout the soloist and corps level. This strength is based on its school and others throughout the Soviet Union which see many of their most talented pupils incorporated into the Bolshoi. The company is weak in its contemporary choreography. Grigorovitch's emphasis on dancing rather than acting was a needed corrective. However, his and his country's inability to uncouple artistic and political concerns leaves these wonderful dancers little to express creatively.

DON McDONAGH

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Gordon Lish's fascination with memory, fear, & violence

WRITING THE TROUBLING TRUTH

ROBERT JONES

The public fascination with the mess F. Scott Fitzgerald made of his life encouraged the confusion in popular culture that sees serious writers as something like movie stars who can type. What is significant about Fitzgerald's peculiar fame is that even when he was alive, he was more famous than his novels. His and Zelda's escapades were known to people who did not ordinarily read, and his years in Hollywood and the excesses that felled him made him seem no different from any other actor on a downhill binge. And despite his torture in his last years at being unable to write and shame at having been reduced to a studio hack, he came to personify a kind of glamour that the public associated with writers. In the fifty years since Fitzgerald's death, our literary icons are even more victimized by the prevailing cult of personality, so that now more than ever, a writer's work is incidental to the life. The likes of Philip Roth and Eudora Welty compete for space opposite starlets and sports stars in the pages of weekly magazines.

There is little to be learned by the example of even the most famous of contemporary lives, yet there is now almost no secondary literary figure who is not the subject of a biography. And of some writers, like Virginia Woolf, there is no aspect of her life, including her account ledgers, that is not exposed. But to what purpose? We don't need scores of books on Virginia Woolf. But even less do we need full-scale biographies of decent but unexceptional writers like James Gould Cozzens and Louise Bogan. Long after their books lie unread by anyone but graduate students, their personal misery is resurrected as somehow meaning more than the common sorrow of yet another life unhappily lived.

There is a desperateness to this scavenging of graveyards, as if every life of even fleeting notoriety must be examined for clues to life's purpose. What is handed down as part of the cultural memory is inconsequential data. One can only be thankful for the obscure origins of Homer and Plato.

Of all the writers at work in America, there is one who is presently receiving an astonishing amount of press attention, not so much for the books he writes — which are among the best of contemporary fiction — but for his rather expansive personality. Within the past year or so, Gordon Lish has been called "Captain Fiction," in the pages of *Vanity Fair;* a "cultural commissar" with "more power than *The New Yorker,*" in *The Mississippi Review*; the subject of endless speculation about his supposedly Machiavellian teaching methods in the pages of *Spy* magazine; and most curiously, in an article in *The New Republic* this fall, as something akin to a literary monster — because of his triple hat of author, editor, and teacher — who is almost singlehandedly destroying modern writing.

It is instructive to watch someone being adopted by the media and turned into a "personality" before our eyes. The very democracy of fame in which everyone becomes equally well-known and, within that context, equally pointless, declaws even the mightiest. Popularizing is a kind of strait jacket that presents writers publicly in ways that are easily digestible, so that any threat in what they say, or what they represent, is defused. If what is known about them is how many dogs or nervous breakdowns they have had, or in Lish's case, rumors of the spell he induces in his students, then the work drifts away from center stage. The act of writing serves merely as a vehicle for becoming famous, not for what the writing might tell us about the way we live.

Gordon Lish has plenty to tell us about the way we live now, but it is easier to hear about his seduction of young minds, so that he is portrayed as the Reverend Moon to the literary set. But what should trouble readers is what Lish says about how we are imprisoned by memory and are undermined by fear. For this is the message found in his books and where he achieves the only power that should concern us: as a teller of truth.

Accustomed as we are to the elegiac pull of the great modernist writers, we have come to see memory as a kind of imaginative resting place. But what if there is no peace to be found and the return to the past reveals simply the horrors that were always there and continue to thrive in the unconscious? As a writer, Gordon Lish is obsessed with our attempts to become unentangled by the past. His novel *Peru*, published last year, tells us that personal history can never really be remade, but is replayed incessantly in images unloosed by the imagination. Memory becomes a kind of cul de sac in which we are constantly flung back into the past, just as we think we have hidden ourselves in the present.

To enter the world of Lish's fiction, we must think for a moment of the most unspeakable thing we have done — or thought of doing — and then imagine it unfolding before us as a real event. And how we could be swept away as it took possession of our consciousness and grew, so that all life would be overwhelmed by that one moment. Or imag-

ROBERT JONES, *who works for a major publisher in New York City, writes frequently on literary subjects for* Commonweal.

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ine murdering someone and keeping it secret from even those closest to you. The pressure of that secret would build over time until it began to choke you. Lish is fascinated with the revelation of our most terrible thoughts because in speaking them, we disclose what is truest about ourselves. This is not to say that we are all monsters, but that in our secrets, we are most stripped of evasion and the social conventions that make us able to slip more easily into lies.

The tension in every mind between an essentially truth-telling consciousness and the utterance of the unspeakable is fundamental to Lish's vision. He often chooses violence as his theme — for example, the serial killer in *Dear Mr. Capote*, or the child murderer in *Peru*, — and because of this, he is frequently, and facilely, dismissed as a sensationalist. But violence is a necessary subject for him. Its extreme images allow Lish to describe the pressure of guilt upon thought and how the memory of the unspeakable and the compulsion to confess form the ground to experience.

In *Peru* the narrator tells of how he went outside to play and it began to rain and so he sat inside the garage and:

> kept feeling funny and out of the ordinary, as if I were in some kind of trouble and that certain things I didn't exactly know about yet were probably dangerously unfinished, lying lopsided somewhere and being dangerous, and it made me feel a terrible wildness, this strange feeling, it made me feel as if I had to feel the wildness if I was ever going to get rid of the strange feeling, which I think, to my way of thinking as a child, was the worse one, the feeling before the feeling of wildness, the feeling of incompletion and of chaos, a feeling of things getting started and of never getting them over with.

This terrible wildness, this feeling of being swept away by the power of our own imagination reveals the hugeness of the world and what tiny things we are in proportion to it. Lish shares with Freud the idea that human beings step into a malevolent world and thereby receive their education to reality. But for Lish, we are never assimilated to this catastrophic entry into experience.

There is something almost pre-modern in Lish's understanding of how we awaken to the world and find ourselves assaulted by a never-ending stream of images. He does not give us the familiar, repressed human mind, but one that sees everything as if for the first time: not just things and events, but ordinary human emotion. There is a rawness to his characters' response to the world and a sense of being so freshly stunned that they seem to have dropped into the present age from some other period.

As the narrator in *Peru* reflects from middle-age upon the time he killed his playmate, Steven Adinoff, in the sandbox, he speaks about how it felt then and says, "I'll tell you something else — which is that the way you felt when you were six is the way you still feel. Getting older doesn't get you any further away from the feeling, it just gets you further away from telling the truth about it to anybody." We carry in our hearts the dislocation of the child being struck with the dizziness that is the first awareness of our separateness. But it would be a mistake to sentimentalize Lish's idea of the child shadowing our passage into adulthood. His six-year-old in *Peru* is a murderer, after all. Lish is fascinated by children because each one of them is like the original human placing an expectant foot on earth. And all there is to know is waiting for them to come upon like a loose board in the floor.

One of our greatest myths is that in knowledge is freedom, and that by understanding the world, we find our place within it. Lish is obsessed with what we can learn, but he inverts the romantic notion of knowledge as liberation by telling us that we never get far from where we began. As the epigraph to his collection of short stories, *What I Know So Far*, he chose this quotation from Adorno: "Of the world as we know it, it is impossible to be enough afraid." Fear is the natural partner to the awakening of consciousness, and the more we know about experience, the more we learn to be afraid.

The perversity of the human mind is that this fear accelerates the compulsion to know. But we are unequipped to choose the thing — if anything exists — that might save us or at least halt for a moment the unrelenting barrage of images that pass before us. To recognize Lish's difference in this regard from other writers, think of one of the great passages in stream-of-consciousness writing, Bernard's final summation in *The Waves:*

> But it is a mistake, this extreme precision, this orderly and military progress, a convenience, a lie. There is always deep below it. . . . There is nothing one can fish up with a spoon, nothing one can call an event. Yet it is alive too and deep, this stream . . . Whatever sentence I extract whole and entire from the cauldron is only a string of six little fish that let themselves be caught while a million others leap and sizzle. . . . How impossible to order them rightly, to detach one separately, or to give the effect of the whole.

Even when describing the loss of the self, Bernard marvels at the richness of the parts that make up the whole of life and celebrates how consciousness — vast, potent, and imprecise — brings into harmony only one small aspect of the mutable variety experience offers us.

Lish, too, describes what consciousness is like. There is a randomness to the way thought follows thought in his characters' minds, and a weird, almost primal rhythm to his prose, that makes some passages in his books seem closer to mirroring the way we think than any of his modernist predecessors. But he is as far as one can go from reveling in the

Books by Gordon Lish

Dear Mr. Capote, *Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983, 264 pp.*

Peru, *Dutton, 1986, 252 pp.*

What I Know So Far, *Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1984.*

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haphazard continuity found in Woolf's "rushing stream of broken dreams."

Consciousness for Lish functions as a kind of weapon, sometimes self-inflicted, sometimes pointed out towards the world. To read him is to remember the peculiar power of the mind, of how we can make something exist simply by thinking it. We tend to see the mind as something independent of the world outside. But in Lish's view, everything we can believe or conjure or fantasize begins to live in our line of horizon. When reading his books, one cannot imagine a street in a suburb he might describe, or a department store in Manhattan, or even a television set in a bedroom, without his character being part of the act of seeing it. This is not simply the case of the exterior world emerging through the thoughts of his characters; there is no world seen without the self. Lish goes the Cartesian "I think, therefore I am" one better by replacing it with: "I think, therefore *it is*."

We make things exist. There is a giddy ecstasy to the realization of our power to be so wildly self-creating, but also an exhaustion and despair. Listen again to the narrator in *Peru* speak about how it was when he was a child:

> It's actually incredible, but I used to think that if I didn't pay attention to something, then it would just go away, just not be there anymore, whereas I knew that what my problem with this was always going to be was that I couldn't not do it, that I just couldn't not think of things . . . that I was just like God was, that I was always going to be thinking of every single solitary thing, of even of the smallest things there were. . . . I tell you, when I was six, I had the thought that I had to keep everything, but everything in my mind, that it was my job, that it was up to me to keep it all going by keeping it all in my mind.

An impossible weight is placed on the mind to absorb everything it sees and somehow make sense of it. Lish's characters are obsessed with understanding what has happened to them, but the very limitlessness of experience propels them into the nightmare of knowledge:

> There was just the day which was so hot and sitting on the curb and thinking to myself . . . "It's hot," "It's lot," "It's not," "It's top," "It's mop," "It's mop," "It's nop," "Tip top," "Sip," "Hip hop," and so on and so forth — and on and on and on . . . It's the closest you ever get to feeling that you yourself are God or that if there wasn't any God, then that this would be the same thing which he was, that it was God who could rhyme all of the words, or at least which did once.
>
> But there is a God, so you give up.

From the epigraph to *Peru* which is the child's poem, "One two buckle my shoe," to the six-year-old's mad rhyme of "hot," Lish shows us the fevered underside of Croce's idea of language as

"What began as a kind of spiritual retreat ended as a retreat from a part of myself I had taken for granted. I am embarked on a lonelier journey."

Journey from Paradise

Mt. Athos and the Interior Life

Ralph Harper

On Mt. Athos, a remote Greek peninsula, the ancient monasteries follow a way of life unchanged for a thousand years. To this Holy Mountain of Eastern Christianity came traveller and religious philosopher Ralph Harper, expecting to find spiritual kinship with the orthodox monks dedicated to "living the mystery in all things."

Harper records a journey of astonishing natural beauty, spiritual searching, and unexpected challenges to deeply held convictions. He vividly recreates this "retreat from the various sources of unhappiness in what Christians from East to West call 'the world.'" And he reflects on the conflicting ideals of the interior life that ultimately left him alienated from the monks whose values and contemplative way of life he had felt he shared.

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perpetual creation. A word for anything imaginable exists, and then a word that means the same thing, and a word that sounds like it, and on and on until language itself dissolves in unmeaning.

And yet, there is nothing without words. Lish tells us that the very structure of seeing is a linguistic one. If experience is viewed as one hallucination unfolding into the next, and each one imploding in its turn upon the mind, then language is the only means we have to objectify this experience. Language brings us (literally) out of our minds; by naming, we give things a form by which they appear as something other than the self. And it is only in this attempt to create a distance from ourselves, however tenuous or even illusory, that we can make the amorphous movement of experience seem concrete.

Lish takes nothing for granted, even the fact that we speak and see. His books possess unnerving power because in them we rediscover the strangeness of our minds and the queer sounds we utter to explain ourselves. Listen, sometime, to a person chatter in a foreign tongue that you don't understand and consider how odd the trail of nonsensical syllables appears to the uneducated ear. This is the state Lish brings us to in our own language, the place where words begin in all their complexity and mystery.

Lish's capacity to shock is partly to reawaken us to the fantastic ways we imagine the world. The killer in *Dear Mr. Capote* slays his victims by the grotesque act of stabbing them in the eye. He approaches them on the street and gets their attention, not by touching them, but by saying a single word: capstone or impediment or effectuate or scintilla. It is the solitary word, somewhat out of the ordinary, that distracts them from their anonymous walk down the street and forces them to turn around and stare. And in these murders, Lish gives us one of the most arresting images imaginable for the power of language to hold us in its thrall.

But it would be tempering his seriousness to imply that the violence in *Dear Mr. Capote* or *Peru* serves only to make a point about language — or as if Lish were merely obsessed with the play of the signifier following its endless chain of associations. The characters in Lish's novels have each done — or imagined — something unspeakable and are compelled to tell it. And each is haunted and paralyzed by the memory of that event.

For the narrator in *Peru*, it is witnessing on television the massacre of inmates during a prison break in Peru that returns him to the murder of Steven Adinoff. Through the relentless repetition of how he beat the boy with the toy hoe, Lish describes our imprisonment in the past. In his work, memory is fed by guilt and is the place where the truth hides in our minds, sometimes dormant, but never absent or able to be erased.

In the modern literature that has endured, memory is a way of recharting lost territory. Think of Joyce's Dublin or Nabokov's Russia. They lay claim to the harmony found in experience after the fact. Memory attains a kind of mythic power to liberate and remake the world through language, so that we might come to peace with the past. Lish suggests that language and memory lack the convenience of forgetting. Once something is named, it is irrevocable. His characters remain trapped in the past because memory's return only replays all that has happened to them. They want what each of us wants: a second chance. But for Lish, there are no fresh starts.

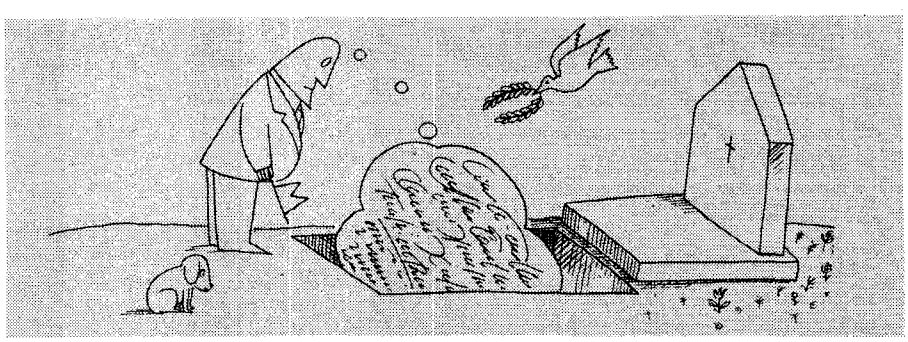
"Peru" means many things in his novel, but I believe in part it is an anagram of the word "pure." His characters speak themselves to a frenzy to try to empty themselves of the memory of what they've done, as if discourse could wash away a stain. The language of reminiscence seeks the emptiness we all desire in our hearts but fail to find, the kind of purity with which we begin life and lose ever after. Memory is meant to return us there, but instead it is the judge we each possess that reminds us what is truest about ourselves and just how far we have strayed.

Gordon Lish's critics are quick to jump on him (and his so-called disciples) because they are presumed to offer us only a tiny segment of life, and a nasty one at that. In the *New Republic*, Sven Birkerts, one of a new breed of neoconservative literary critics, misreads Lish and some of his authors, like Amy Hempel, and suggests that

> . . . their work represents an abrogation of literary responsibility. If fiction is to survive as more than a coterie sport, it must venture something greater than a passive reflection of fragmentation and unease. Indeed it must manifest intelligence, moral seriousness, and relentlessness. And I would add, comprehensiveness and scope.

Arnold Bennett would be proud. "Literary responsibility" is the kind of pious term that has a nice ring and is essentially meaningless. To create an image of how life appears to one is the only "responsibility" we can reasonably expect of any artist.

In his attack on Hegel's idealism, Adorno wrote: "the whole is the untrue." To seek the whole story, the narrative that will explain the scope and range of life, is an understandable dream. But this desire often forsakes the world as it is for a fantasy of how it ought to be. Writers like Gordon Lish understand how humbled we are by the vastness of experience. And yet, the writer's subterfuge is to seize the smallest part and reveal the truth entirely through the language of fragments.



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Grasping metaphors of ultimacy

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND THE MODERN PSYCHOLOGIES
A CRITICAL CONVERSATION IN THE THEOLOGY OF CULTURE

Don S. Browning
Fortress, $22.50, 268 pp.

Eugene Fontinell

How many times have we battled with our more psychologically oriented friends (professional and non-professional) and argued, for the most part to no avail, that their psychology had the character of a religion, that they were basing their conclusions and practices on unquestioned assumptions, indeed on unacknowledged acts of faith? Well, thanks to Don S. Browning, Alexander Campbell Professor of Religion and Psychological Studies at the Divinity School, University of Chicago, a fine work is now available which will enable us to cite chapter and verse in support of our more or less vague impressions.

In *Religious Thought,* Browning continues a project initiated in his *Generative Man* (Westminster, 1973) and further developed in *Pluralism and Personality* (Bucknell, 1980). The earlier work was an "essay in cultural analysis" which "bracketed all theological issues." The second work utilizes the *philosophical* psychology of William James, splendidly explicated, to critique a number of modern psychologists. The critique is basically constructive. There is no claim that James had already done what modern psychology is doing, but Browning maintains that James did possess the larger vision — one more in keeping with the concreteness and the breadth of the actual human condition. It is in the work under consideration, however, that Browning realizes his more distinctive role as a theologian of culture. Not that he makes any pretense to having presented a fully developed theology of culture. He has given, however, a work which is a significant contribution to what he calls in his subtitle "A Critical Conversation in the Theology of Culture."

Religious Thought returns to the schematization of modern psychologies which Browning constructed in *Pluralism and Personality,* but the return is not repetition. These psychologies are now more richly and subtly developed and, most important, viewed and evaluated over against what might be called an incipient theological metaphysics. Browning does not consider the psychologies under review from a scientific or clinical perspective but rather as "cultural documents" and "systems of practical moral philosophy" that influence the character of our society and the way in which we live.

While making no claims for completeness, he locates modern psychologies in one of four categories: the "culture of detachment" (Freud); the "culture of control" (Skinner); the "culture of joy" (Maslow, Rogers, Perls, Jung); the "culture of care" (Erikson and Kohut). Each of these is critiqued in the light of an Augustinian-Kierkegaardian anthropology as articulated by Reinhold Niebuhr, supplemented by James ("deepening Niebuhr's typically American appeal to experience as a test for theological judgments and truths"), and Paul Ricoeur ("amplifying and balancing Niebuhr's critique of psychoanalysis"). Niebuhr's doctrine of agape is in turn critically refined in terms of the "older Catholic view of love as *caritas.*"

Browning contends that each of these psychologies involves metaphysical and ethical aspects that exceed the limits of what is customarily understood as "empirical" or "scientific." He is not suggesting simply that these psychologies should or could "stay in their own backyard." For the future, Browning would like to see two distinct models of psychology emerge: "one more properly scientific, descriptive, and predictive and one more self-consciously critical and normative." What is and has been the situation, however, is much more muddled and what is immediately needed is a description and evaluation of this muddle. As a start, it must be recognized that "clinical

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psychologies, especially, cannot avoid a metaphysical and ethical horizon and, for this reason, they should critically ground these features of their systems rather than unwittingly lapse into them."

The metaphysical character of the psychologies discussed by Browning is expressed in terms of what he calls "metaphors of ultimacy"; the ethical character in terms of "principles of obligation." The latter phrase is self-explanatory but a more scientific indication of how Browning understands "metaphors of ultimacy" might be helpful. Drawing upon a number of contemporary thinkers, Browning views metaphors as familiar terms employed to aid us in our effort to grasp the unfamiliar. *"This is the common element in all metaphors that makes them fundamental to both religious discernment and scientific discovery."* In order to represent the "world in its most durable and ultimate respects" as well as the "ultimate context of experience," we must employ "metaphors of ultimacy." This holds since "none of us...really knows in any direct, tangible, and sensory way what the ultimate context of experience is." Thus we are dependent upon these metaphors to "tell us something about the ultimate conditions of the world in which we live and present a picture of what is morally possible within that world." While the metaphors we choose are in the first instance "a matter of faith," the decision as to which are the better metaphors "is not something that should be decided completely on faith."

The specific process by which Browning evaluates the various metaphors of ultimacy and the principles of obligation to which they give rise emerges in two stages. The first involves little more than "laying them alongside the metaphors of ultimacy and ethics of selected interpretations of Christian thought." In turning to the second stage, Browning acknowledges that a full evaluation would involve an exercise in comparative metaphysics but, following James's pragmatic approach, he restricts himself to "moral experience as at least one aspect of the relative adequacy of a metaphor of ultimacy."

Hence, his test is based upon what he claims is the "rational core of morality," which is "mutuality understood as equal-regard" — the ethic implied by the Golden Rule and neighbor-love. He contends that this core is "paradigm-independent" and insofar as forms of it appear "outside specifically Christian or Jewish sources," he suspects "that we are dealing here with a natural product of the human mind of some universal significance." This is, of course, a rather large claim and raises a question as to whether Browning is falling back upon a mode of metaphysical essentialism and a questionable natural law theory. The entire thrust of his inquiry, however, would seem to go counter to such a metaphysics.

It is not possible to summarize the rich manner in which Browning analyzes and evaluates each of these psychologists, explicating their distinctive metaphors and principles of obligation and judging them wanting when compared with the anthropology rooted in the Jewish and Christian traditions and the rational core of morality which transcends all religious traditions. But while Browning's critical analysis of these thinkers is subtle and complex, it is also clear and possible. *Religious Thought* can and should be read not only by practicing theologians and psychologists but by any reflective person concerned with the ways in which we construct our world and our moral life within that world.

In noting Browning's strong critical judgments against psychologies, I am not suggesting that he has left nothing for them to do but confess their sins and surrender. Such an interpretation would miss both the spirit and the letter of Browning's *inquiry*. He does not deny that these psychologies are "indispensable for modern life" or that they have an important though limited role to play "in shaping our self-interpretations." Theology, metaphysics, and morality are, and always have been, influenced by psychology, whether folk, philosophical, or modern. What Browning is calling for and contributing to is a dialogue in which *all* participants become critically aware of their assumptions, recognize the non-isolability of their disciplines, and cooperatively strive for new models of inquiry which will still allow for distinction among disciplines but with a deeper appreciation of their limitations and their need to live off the fruits of other disciplines.

The result might be the demise of scientific and psychological triumphalism in the manner of the earlier demise of metaphysical and theological triumphalism. Science and psychology, of course, would no more have "ended" than have metaphysics and theology. Any restoration, however, must be characterized by a critical consciousness, a tentativeness which does not exclude commitment and evaluation, and a pluralism responsive to the richness, scope, and depth of concrete experience. These are, of course, the features which should accompany all modes of human inquiry. In his movement toward a critical theology of culture, Browning has provided us with an illuminating model of how to initiate such inquiry.

OF NIGHTMARES & OPTIMISM

RECKONER

James Tate

Wesleyan University, $17, $8.95 paper, 62 pp.

SKATING WITH MOTHER GRACE

Thomas Lynch

Alfred A. Knopf, $8.95, 60 pp.

Wayne Koestenbaum

A photograph of an Italian hill town, on the cover of James Tate's *Reckoner*, represents the polis that his surrealism strives to reconstruct. Weirdly jocular, with an *idiot savant*'s wit, his poems commit none of the damage they record. The volume opens with an epigraph from Wallace Stevens's

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"The Man on the Dump": Tate does not celebrate the dump, but, recognizing that our civilization is disassembled, that our public life is in ruins, he cites dislocations as evidence of a nostalgia, a longing for the hill town pictured on the cover, for the "dainty frippery of childhood" that keens beneath the "decomposing zones" of his poems.

Take a typically playful and apparently nonsensical passage from *Reckoner:*

> Jenny, Jenny of the surveillance
> walkie-talkies,
> and what about the drainboard and
> the clothesline, huh?
> Jenny of the glade, of the inlet, of
> the shoals,
> can she remember the hot sulphur
> springs?

The "surveillance walkie-talkie" is a fragment of the Orwellian world that has replaced the lost American Eden of Jenny's forgotten "hot sulphur springs." The "drainboard" and the "clothesline" are pieces of that Eden's apparatus: paraphernalia of the lost housekeeper, the lost house. The "glade," "inlet," and "shoals" resonate with the almost cartographical vocabulary of the poems: everywhere we find references to "streets," "a village near Bosnia," "Toledo," "Westport," "pyramids," "skyscrapers."

What seems to shadow this imaginary, only half-drawn city, is the unnamed nuclear catastrophe, most precisely etched in "Smart and Final Iris":

> Pentagon code
> for end of world
> is *rural paradise,*
> if plan fails
> it's *rural paradise* . . .

Pentagon's code is Tate's code, too; surrealism borrows its techniques from Newspeak. When the government's words for danger no longer signify danger, but disguise it, then surrealist poetry reenacts that linguistic dishonesty in order to undermine its doublethink.

Who is the reckoner of the title if not James Tate himself — the wakeful poet who counts "every little grain of sand"? By writing frequently in the first person, Tate gives us the comforting sense that there is an "I" at the poem's center, that in this chaos, someone is awake, someone is registering. Tate's "I" is a familiar figure — like Kafka's Joseph K., placed in circumstances beyond his comprehension.

> I can't pick up the vacuum cleaner
> without remembering our most
> subtle
> and tender moments, shooing the
> sniper
> from the playground, then picking
> watermelons.
> For the past few months my life has
> read
> like canned-food labels caked with
> panic.

"I am throwing snowballs at the roadmap," Tate writes, responding to regulation and totalitarian design (the roadmap) with a futile, antic gesture (throwing snowballs) that is secretly vatic.

For all their scatter-brained variety, sometimes the poems seem too much alike; the wild language — "O abstinence of my corpulent debauches,/and satchel of my chanting,/turbulence of my decimated bandana" — makes the reader feel winded. Is Tate locked within his manner? "Ululating ninnies," "figurine enchilada," "umpteen laryngitis": in this thicket, we grope for common sense. But is there such a thing as common sense? The air of Tate's poems is thin because the world's air is thin. If it were not for "the thick vines/and fermentation of a national crisis," he could return to a now-inaccessible language where codes were not necessary. Tate writes from a situation of nightmare — and it is language that is having the nightmare.

> For losses under
> 100 million, *a trip*
> *on the wayward bus*
>
> For a future of mutants,
> *bridal parties collide*
>
> World famine is
> *a plague of beatniks*

Thomas Lynch, poet, makes his living as an undertaker. The jacket copy of his first book of poems, *Skating with Heather Grace,* announces his

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profession as if it had a particular bearing on the way we read his poems — as if it were not just a curious detail, but a credential. We are encouraged to believe that, in the tradition of William Carlos Williams, the man who in his daily work confronts the dead and dying will be a finer instrument, registering tragedy more honestly. Searching in his work for tokens of his privileged understanding of death, I was disappointed to find few new insights.

What the book offers us, in lieu of the extraordinary, are facts of a regular life presented with such velocity that — as the expertly-scanned, jauntily-iambic lines speed past us — we almost feel that swiftness itself conveys a profundity. An illusion of wisdom comes with his distinctive line — a line with so few pauses that we are catapulted to its end without a breath's respite. Often, his lines rhyme, but irregularly, with an American, anti-establishment cheerfulness; the formalism that gilds his verse allows him to be down-home in diction.

Maybe it was the quiet or the dark
or dreamless sleep that sent him from the land
out of Moveen with his tin footlocker —
three weeks at sea in a cheerless steerage
with Mike and Tommy, the priest I'd be named for,
and Brigid, the Mrs., who was big that time —
fat with the makings of my grandfather.

His ear is the ear of Irish poets like Derek Mahon and Paul Muldoon. Swift, fulminous, colloquial, Lynch's poems leave a taste of mulch in the mouth.

These lines, from "The Sin-Eater," exemplify the celerity and particularity of Lynch's best poems:

But still they sent for him and sat him down
amid their whispering contentments to make
his table near the dead man's middle,
and brought him soda bread and bowls of beer
and candles which he lit against the reek
that rose off that impenitent cadaver
though bound in skins and soaked in rosewater.

Lynch's willingness to continue, rather than short-circuit, a thought means that his best poems will be his longest; in "Learning Gravity," a long, ambitious, variegated poem, he has the space to weld together the deaths of Theodore Roethke, J.F.K., and a cousin from Ireland. In a poem of that span, we stumble upon a line — "everything that breathes requires death" — with a sense of having made a miraculous discovery.

Several fine poems feature a contemplation-provoking creature named Argyle, who feeds on the sins of the dead. A figure not of punishment but of purification, Argyle eats the errors the dead leave behind them. Argyle seems a combination of John Berryman's Henry, and the Jackie Gleason character from "The Honeymooners" — as Ronald Firbank would have it, "gorged with pickings." It is a far distance from Argyle to the Eumenides, but Lynch's vigorous and somehow 1980s neo-optimistic verse provides us with adages, like "A good death, even when it kills you, is/ nonetheless some better than a bad one," which warm us with their reasonableness.

RITUAL & THE HUMAN PSYCHE

TO DANCE WITH GOD

Gertrud Mueller Nelson

Paulist, $9.95, 245 pp.

Fanny Howe

It is always a pleasure to discover a book that fits no categories, since an excess of law and genre oppresses the book world these days. A book which belongs as well on one shelf as on another is a kind of "free" book, and must contain secrets worth exploring. When this book also happens to have God's name in its title and to be, presumably, a prescriptive book for Christians, its freedom from easy labeling is all the more stunning.

To Dance with God is a sensuous and original narrative on the needs and how-tos of rituals. Nelson, who studied art in Germany, taught in Montessori schools, and attended the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich, has also illustrated this book, not with the clip art for which she is well known, but with full-blown pictures. She writes: "The poetic, the symbolic, the sacramental, the mythic, though it is elusive and fitting, is just as true and real and just as valuable as what is rational, historic, scientific." And this indeed is her thesis as she offers ways to celebrate and transcend the rational (masculine) world and give meaning back to our passage through matter (*mater*, mother).

From Advent to Lent to Easter to the Feast of the Assumption (a particularly passionate chapter in the book) Nelson provides a mix of sensible and inspired suggestions for conveying the holy quality of the day. "Holes are created in time through the creation of holidays," she writes. "Such a hole in time, the holy-time-out is not only what the contemporary work ethic would have us believe — a coffee break so that we can return more efficient at the job/assembly line . . . Holy days refresh, replenish, and ratify our common experiences; they make what has become ordinary extraordinary."

Herbs, fruits, breads, wine, gestures, candles, pictures, costumes, recipes, prayers, and songs follow alongside insights into the human psyche. The approach is feminist in its insistence on the validity of the domestic detail to inspire celebration of a profound nature. Ritual in the home, as well as in the church, is

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the source of a sane and enduring community, Nelson insists.

Biographical details support her insights. In her relations with her own family, we see the ways in which she respects childhood without in any way diminishing the full use of her knowledge as an adult. In this way she provides an unusual example of adult action. The book seems to legitimize being a grown-up, a state which is not always held in thrall. Building rituals out of the mundane is a way of building bridges between the adult and the child; this is perhaps the major instruction of this book.

"We like," she says, "the idea of a father who will sneak about in the night and while we sleep keep the world afloat and our enemy vanquished. Santa Claus as our hero for fatherhood is in danger of looking foolish or anemic or patronizing. Sentimentality wants the look of a jolly provider, a father who is buddy and pal. How can we reconsider his image in the light of the whole truth?"

This book will answer that question and help both church community and family rediscover rituals involving psyche and action. The child we all carry within us is restored in these pages and is given a choreography of worship to follow.

REEXAMINING THE REVOLUTION

HUNGARY AND THE SOVIET BLOC

Charles Gati
Duke University,
$40, $14.95 paper, 244 pp.

Ivan Sanders

It's often said that the last stronghold of pro-Americanism in the world today is Eastern Europe; it is one place where attachment to things American remains unambiguous, sentimental. Yet, as Charles Gati points out in his astute survey of postwar bloc relations, Eastern Europe, as far as American foreign policy priorities are concerned, is more or less a forgotten region.

Because Soviet domination of the area is believed by many to be total, and the bloc itself is often perceived as an undifferentiated group of client states, the eastern half of Europe has in a sense been written off; in the one area that does call for bold new initiatives, American policy is famously unadventurous — and has been from the earliest days of the Cold War, the saber-rattling, maximalist rhetoric of the fifties notwithstanding. Others before Gati have already exposed the "myth of liberation," and noted that that whole policy was devised by Republicans "to roll back the Democrats in the United States, not the Red Army in Eastern Europe."

In stressing the need for creative differentiation in our relations with Eastern Europe, the author, a professor of political science at Union College in Schenectady, is really pushing for alternatives to stock responses which for forty years have consisted of heated words and token gestures in times of crisis, and benign indifference in between.

Gati's reasons for advocating greater flexibility are often startling. His main thesis is that Soviet policies in Eastern Europe have traditionally been far more cautious and tentative, and Soviet positions in the area far more vulnerable, than is commonly assumed.

The book focuses on Hungary, the once rebellious and now shrewdly compliant ally. In tracing the political history of postwar Hungary, Gati demonstrates again and again that the momentous turning points of that history, including the Communist takeover in 1948 and the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, were not quite as inevitable as most people believe. After the war the Russians were all for democratically-elected coalition governments in Central Europe. Local Communists were told to keep a low profile and cooperate with their coalition partners. Only in Hungary were discredited fascists excluded from the first freely-elected postwar government.

It could be easily argued, of course, that Russia's accommodative posture at that point was strategic, part of a grand design — a spirit of cooperation was needed in some of the liberated countries to soften the impact of the quick Sovietization of others. There is no question that the Soviet Union *intended* to dominate Eastern Europe; even without Yalta, Stalin took it for granted that after the war the victors would establish their respective spheres of influence in Europe.

Gati is not trying to reassess basic Soviet motives; all he is suggesting is that the Communist takeover in East Central Europe was not a foregone conclusion; there was no timetable, no immutable master plan. In Hungary, for example, Muscovite returnees were instructing local Communists to prepare for ten to fifteen years of parliamentary rule, and as late as 1946, Gati reports, war-hero Kliment Voroshilov told Soviet members of the Allied Control Commission to be ready to depart on short notice in case Soviet forces decided to pull out of Hungary.

As we know, the Soviets didn't pull out and the country's democratic interlude came to an end a year later. Obviously, the presence of occupation forces, as well as the cunningly divisive "salami tactics" of party strong man Mátyás Rákosi facilitated the Communist takeover in 1948. But other factors— the weakness of indigenous democratic institutions, infighting among non-

REVIEWERS

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Communist coalition partners—also played a role. Moreover, Gati maintains that it was political developments in the rest of Europe, notably the exclusion of the Communist Party from coalition governments in Italy and France, that may have finally tipped the balance and made the Soviets abandon their "gradualist" approach in a country like Hungary.

The reexamination of two Hungarian Communist leaders' evolving relationship with Moscow also yields new insights. Gati is able to show that Imre Nagy, who headed the short-lived revolutionary government in 1956 and who was subsequently hanged for it, was more of a "true believer," and also trusted the Russians more, than János Kádár whose path to power was cleared by Russian tanks. We learn for the first time that Nagy was in constant touch with Soviet leaders during the revolution and actually got their approval for some of his unprecedented reforms, including the reintroduction of the multiparty system. Only when he learned that instead of pulling out of the country Russian forces were pouring back in, did Nagy break with Moscow, declaring Hungary's neutrality and intention to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact.

There are still those who feel that if only Imre Nagy hadn't gone that far, the revolution could have been saved. (Gati points out in a different context that the Russians are reluctant to move against Communist regimes whose top leadership defies Soviet supremacy in an unequivocal but controlled manner — witness the cases of Yugoslavia and Rumania.) But the events of 1956 had a logic of their own. "The revolution's obviously excessive demands," notes Gati, "its lack of realism, was a function of what the Hungarian people had been denied. They only reacted to the excessive demands that had been made on them, to the lack of realism in the policies of the Kremlin and the Rákosi-Gerö regimes since about 1947-48."

The portrait of János Kádár, on the other hand, is that of a shrewd politician who has learned to respond to his people's needs without antagonizing the Kremlin. He is perhaps more profoundly aware than any other East European leader of what Gati sees as the central paradox of these rulers, which is the ruler's knowledge that while he may depend on Moscow for his survival, his ability to govern is determined by the degree to which he can distance himself from the Kremlin. Kádár has been performing his balancing act for thirty years, and the ultimate secret of his success may be that, unlike his one-time comrade, Imre Nagy, he has no illusion about his sponsors. "Do you *really* know the kind of people you're dealing with?" he was supposed to have said to a still hopeful Alexander Dubĉek a few days before Soviet tanks rolled into Prague in the summer of 1968.

Imre Nagy is seen by most Hungarians as the great martyr of the 1956 Revolution, and Kádár, despite his checkered past, remains one of the few genuinely popular Communist leaders in the world. Needless to say, Gati offers no forgiveness for Hungary's pre-1956 Stalinist leadership, which is as it should be, though what is frequently forgotten is that both Nagy and Kádár were, for a time, members of that leadership. Significantly enough, they were two non-Jews in the otherwise heavily Jewish Hungarian Communist elite. (The "Jewish question" adds another twist to the already complicated story of postwar Hungary; long ignored or glossed over, the subject is treated realistically by Gati.)

One could argue about who actually was the very best student of Stalin in the Soviet bloc — that is, the most ruthless and cynical local overlord; but there is no doubt that Hungary's top Stalinists tried to outdo other satellite leaders in slavishly emulating their master's ways. The question remaining is whether they did it because they were loyal Muscovites or because as Jews they felt insecure, alienated from the Hungarian people, and saw the Kremlin rulers as their only protectors — protectors who were quick to repudiate them once they were no longer considered useful.

The chapters on Nagy, Kádár, and the revolution are easily the most penetrating in Gati's book, which could be explained by the simple fact that the author himself was born in Hungary and left it as a budding journalist in 1956. Yet, there is nothing narrow or parochial in his approach to contemporary East European history. In fact, one of the virtues of the study is that it places Hungary's problems squarely in an international context, something East European scholars don't

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always do. But to non-specialists the greatest value of the book is its nuanced analysis of Soviet behavior. By exposing the cautious and conservative aspects of Soviet foreign policy, as well its pertinacious, opportunistic features, Charles Gati is clearly implying a need for a more balanced, realistic view of our major adversary.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 466)

Rosemarie Brickley's article ["God Isn't Finished with Me Yet," July 17] which makes the point so refreshingly.

When disillusionment or apathy comes into the life of our communities, we need to be reminded that somehow God can break into our lives in the midst of our anger or confusion to remake us. So many lay people, like Rosemarie Brickley, can eloquently narrate this movement in the stories of their lives.

Are the pope and bishops ready? Stay tuned for the synod!

J. MICHAEL McMAHON

Our common heritage

Baltimore, Md.

To the Editors: A temporary setback such as the flak and fall out from the meeting of the pontiff with Kurt Waldheim, should not set back Catholic Jewish relations permanently [editorial, "Seeing Waldheim," July 17]. We have all suffered so much, and we must work together in common goals. Sure there are differences, but we can agree where we disagree. I hope that your magazine will continue to dialogue and discuss our common heritage and work for a better world. We must not leave a heritage of hate and distrust for our children.

MELVIN N. COHEN

Waldheim's actions

Indianapolis, Ind.

To the Editors: Regarding your editorial ["Seeing Waldheim," July 17], we should remember that Secretary General Waldheim (1971-81) put the UN Emergency Forces into the Suez Canal (1973) and the Golan Heights (1974) and was Secretary General when the Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 1981 received its second Nobel Peace Prize. These activities far exceed in importance anything a lieutenant in the Austrian Army did during World War II. I am sure all Austrian Catholics to some extent rationalize the persecution and massacre of Jews which took place just before and during the Second World War. Vatican II clearly says we were all "deeply affected by the memory of the persecution."

The Reagan administration's declaration of Kurt Waldheim as a "persona non grata" was certainly counter-productive as far as peace in the Middle East is concerned. The shadow of the Holocaust is at present allowing Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel nearly single-handedly to prevent an international peace conference in the Middle East. Pope John Paul II is promoting peace "now," and Catholics certainly should not be on the defensive for his actions. It's the Reagan administration's actions that should be questioned.

BOB TWITCHELL

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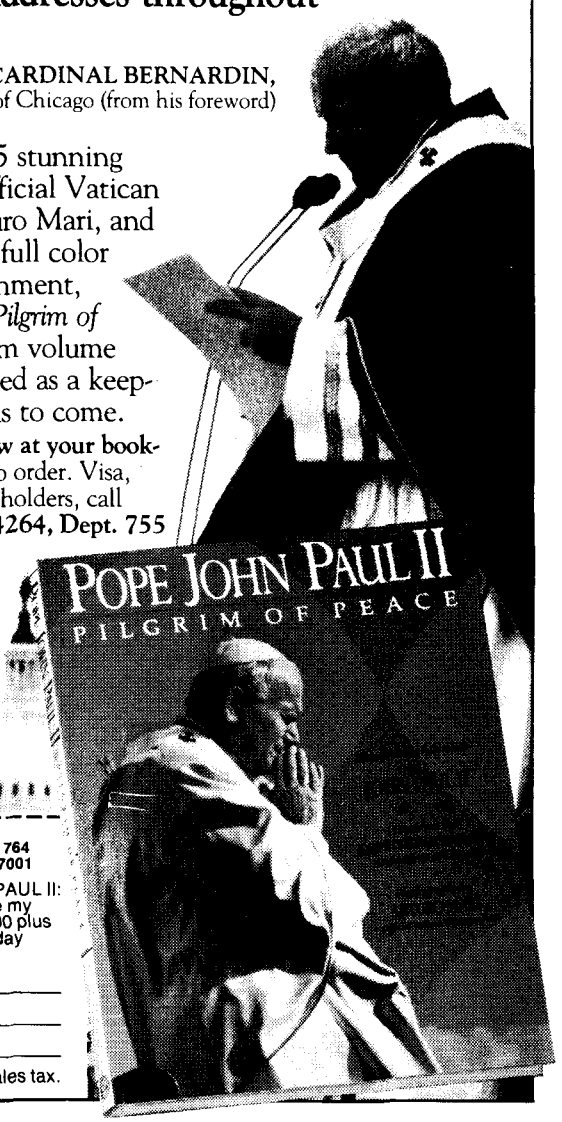

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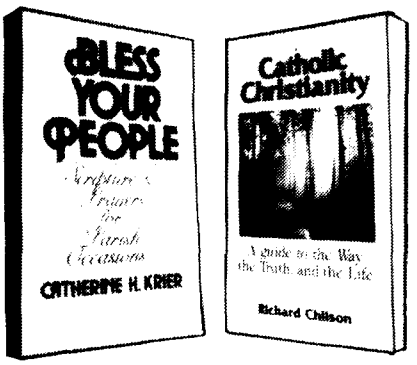

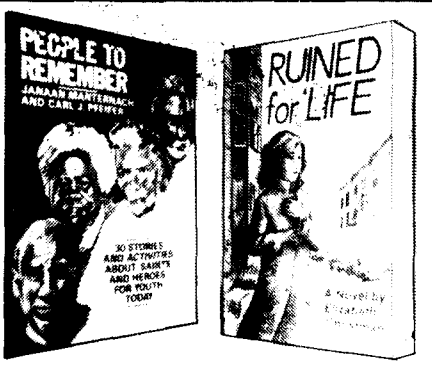

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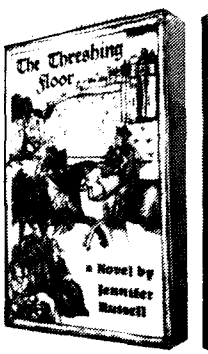

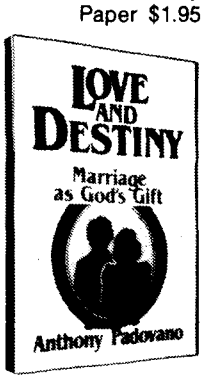

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